

**LEARNING ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF
EUROPEAN GAZA HOSPITAL (EGH) – GAZA
STRIP**

HALA SALMAN HASSAN AIASH

**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA
2015**

**LEARNING ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF
EUROPEAN GAZA HOSPITAL (EGH) – GAZA
STRIP**

by

HALA SALMAN HASSAN AIASH

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

February 2015

DEDICATION

To the most appreciated parents; My father who is my idol "Mr. Salman Aiash" and My respectful mother "Mrs. Nora Aiash"

To my beloved husband "Khalil Shaqfa"

To all those who respect knowledge

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Gracious. All praise is due to Allah; we praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. I am thankful to Allah, who supplied me with the courage, the guidance, and the love to complete this research. Also, I cannot forget the ideal man of the world and most respectable personality for whom Allah created the whole universe, Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him).

Although any learning activity is a lonely personal project, it requires help, support and encouragement of others to be successful. Just as an eagle could not soar without the invisible strength of the wind, I could not have arrived at this place without all the invisible hands that provided me that strength

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my main supervisor Associate Professor Dr. Osman Md Yusoff for the continuous support of my Ph.D study and research, for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my Ph.D study.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my co-supervisor, Dr. Khoo Suet Leng her timely guidance, constant support, encouragement, valuable suggestions and co-operation has motivated me to complete this research study.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Dean, School of Social Sciences, Dr. Nor Malina Malek and all the staff of the respectful school for their support and help towards my postgraduate affairs.

Specially and most sincerely, I would like to pay my warmest tribute to my beloved husband Khalil Shaqfa whose great patience love and strong emotional support made my life pleasant even in the hardest times. I would like to thank my family, especially my mother and father for always believing in me, for their continuous love and their supports in my decisions. Without whom I could not have made it here

Special thanks and appreciation to Dr. Abd Alatef Alhaj the director general of European Gaza Hospital, and Dr. Nasser Abu Shapan the general director of human resource development in Palestinian Ministry of Health who approved to collect data, and for expending their efforts and times in the interviews.

Last but not the least, would like to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all who have in one way or the other contributed to the successful completion of this study.

To all, my deepest thank.

Hala Salman Aiash

2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Acknowledgment	II
Table Of Contents	IV
List Of Tables	VIII
List Of Figures	X
List Of Abbreviations	XI
Abstrak	XIII
Abstract	XV
CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Objectives of the study	7
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Significance of the study	8
1.6 Organization of the Thesis	9
CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 The Hierarchy of Learning through Social Development	13
2.2.1 Social Development Theory	15
2.2.2 The Objectives of Social Development	17
2.2.3 Human-Centered Approach	18
2.2.4 Human Development (HD)	20
2.2.5 Human Resource Development (HRD)	22
2.2.6 Harbison and Myers Indicators of HRD	24
2.2.7 Strategic Human Resource Development (HRD)	26
2.2.8 The Role of Human Resource Development (HRD) in Organization: Development	29
2.2.9 Organizations as the Skills of Society	34
2.2.10 Health and Sustainable Development	36
2.2.11 Importance of the Health Sector	39
2.2.12 Education and Health in Economic Development	40
2.2.13 Summary of Social Development Principles	43

2.3	Learning Organization	46
2.3.1	Definitions of Learning Organization (LO)	48
2.3.2	Importance of Learning Organizations (LOs)	50
2.3.3	Learning Organizational Theory	52
	2.3.3 (a) Systems Theory and the Learning Organization Model	52
	2.3.3 (b) Chris Argyris: Theories of Action, Double-Loop Learning and Learning Organizational Model	53
2.3.4	Learning Organization Model	56
	2.3.4 (a) The Five Disciplines of Senge Model	57
	2.3.4 (b) The Seven Dimensions of a Learning Organization Models	61
2.3.5	Characteristics of Learning Organization (LO)	64
	2.3.5(a) Learning and Training	64
	2.3.5(b) An Organization's Culture and Structure	70
	2.3.5(c) Leadership Role in a Learning Organization (LO)	73
2.3.6	Organizational Performance	77
2.4	Conceptual Framework of this study	79
2.5	Operational Definitions of Terms	83
	2.5.1 Development	83
	2.5.2 Human Resource Development	83
	2.5.3 Millennium Development Goals	83
	2.5.4 Health Care Systems	83
	2.5.5 Health education	83
	2.5.6 Learning	83
	2.5.7 Training	84
	2.5.8 Learning Organization	84
	2.5.9 Organizational Learning	84
2.6	Summary	84

CHAPTER 3- BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA

3.1	Introduction	88
3.2	Demographic Profiling of Palestine	88
3.3	Gaza Strip	89
3.4	Labor Market	93
3.5	Socio-Economic Contexts in Gaza	93
3.6	Socio-Political Context in Gaza	94
3.7	Health Status in the Gaza Strip	95
3.8	Training in Gaza Strip	98
3.9	Management and Strategic Planning for Health in Gaza Strip	99
3.10	Hospitals in Gaza Strip	101
3.11	European Gaza Hospital	101
3.12	Summary	106

CHAPTER4- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1	Introduction	108
4.2	Research Design	108
4.3	Quantitative Approach	111
4.3.1	Sampling Design	112
4.3.2	Target population	113
4.3.3	Select Sampling Frame	113
4.3.4	Questionnaire	116
4.3.5	Translation of the Questionnaires	117
4.4	Qualitative Method	118
4.4.1	Sampling of Qualitative Data	119
4.4.2	Face-To-Face Interview	120
4.4.3	Focus Group Interview	122
4.5	Pilot Study	123
4.5.1	Validity	123
4.5.2	Reliability	125
4.6	Data Collection	126
4.7	Data Analysis Technique	127
4.7.1	Quantitative Data Analysis	127
4.7.2	Qualitative Data Analysis	128
4.8	Ethical Considerations	129
4.9	Summary	129

CHAPTER 5- RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1	Introduction	131
5.2	Background of this Study's Respondents	131
5.2.1	Respondents' Demographic Variables	132
5.2.2	Respondents' Characteristics regarding Organizational Variables	133
5.3	Factors Affecting the Concept of Learning Organization in EGH	134
5.3.1	Respondents' Perceptions about a LO's Concepts	134
5.3.2	Concepts of a Learning Organization and Managers' Characteristics	136
5.3.2 (a)	Gender	136
5.3.2 (b)	Academic Certificate	137
5.3.2 (c)	Type of Managerial Job	138
5.3.2 (d)	Type of Specialization	140
5.3.2 (e)	Years' of Experience	140
5.3.3	The Concept of a LO's Characteristics	144
5.3.3 (a)	Strategic Planning of a Learning Organization	144
5.3.3 (b)	Strategic Planning of Education	146
5.3.3 (c)	Availability of a Strategic Plan for Education	148
5.4	Importance of a Learning Organization	149
5.5	Opportunities for receiving Training Programs	151

5.6	Evaluation of the Learning Organizational Process	153
5.6.1	Evaluation of Training Programs	153
5.6.2	Role of Managers in the Implementation of the Training Programs	155
5.6.3	Evaluation of carrying out the Training Programs	157
5.6.4	Evaluation of Training Programs after Implementing	159
5.7	The Role of HRD in Organizational Development	162
5.7.1	Organizational Structure	162
5.7.2	Organizational Performance	164
5.8	Health Education in the Development of the Economy	165
5.9	Summary of Findings	167
5.10	Answering the Research Questions	169
5.11	Summary	182

CHAPTER 6- CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1	Introduction	185
6.2	Summary	185
6.3	Implications of the study	189
6.3.1	Theoretical Implications	189
6.3.2	Managerial Implications	191
6.4	Recommendations	193
6.5	Future Research	196
6.6	Concluding Remarks	197

REFERENCES		200
-------------------	--	-----

APPENDICES

Appendix(A1)	Invitation Letter for the managers in the European Gaza Hospital to participate in a study survey-(English version)	223
Appendix(A2)	Questionnaire-(English version)	224
Appendix(A3)	Invitation Letter for the managers in the European Gaza Hospital to participate in a study survey- (Arabic version)	232
Appendix(A4)	Questionnaire – (Arabic version)	233
Appendix(B)	Interview conducted with the HRD director	240
Appendix(C)	Interview conducted with EGH director	242
Appendix(D)	Information of Participants in Translation, Re-translation and Editing	244
Appendix(E)	Information of Palestinian Practitioners and Academic Staff for Validity	245
Appendix(F)	Formal Letter from Human Resource Development	246
Appendix(G)	Formal Letter from IPS	247

LIST OF TABLES

		PAGE
Table 2.1	Watkins and Marsick's Model of the Seven Dimensions of the Learning Organization.	63
Table 4.1	Hospitals Categories in Gaza Strip	113
Table 4.2	Categories and Numbers of Participants	115
Table 4.3	Cronbach's Alpha for Reliability	126
Table 5.1	Distribution of Participants by Demographic Variables	132
Table 5.2	Distribution of Participant by Characteristics' Variables (Last Academic Certificate and Scientific Background)	133
Table 5.3	Distribution of Participants by Work-Related Variables	134
Table 5.4	The Means of The Five Disciplines and The Dimensions of a LO	135
Table 5.5	Differences in Perceptions about a LO Concepts by Gender	136
Table 5.6	Differences in Perceptions about a LO's Concepts by Academic Certificate	137
Table 5.7	Differences in Perceptions about a LO's Concepts by type of present Job	139
Table 5.8	Difference in perception about a LO's Concepts by the type of Specialization	141
Table 5.9	Differences in perceptions about a LO's concepts by years' of experience in the present Job	143
Table 5.10	Availability and using of Strategic Plan	145
Table 5.11	Differences in perceptions of a LO's Concepts by the availability of a Strategic Plan for Training Purposes	146
Table 5.12	Distribution of Participants by the availability and use of an Educational Strategic Plan	147
Table 5.13	Differences in perceptions about LO's concepts by the availability of a Strategic Plan for Education	148
Table 5.14	Distribution of Participants by Training -Related Practices	151
Table 5.15	Distribution of Participants by Training-Related Design, Implementation and Evaluation	152
Table 5.16	Distribution of Participants by the availability and follow up of Training Plans and Structures	154

Table 5.17	Differences in perceptions about LO Concepts by implementing Training to Colleagues	155
Table 5.18	Differences in perceptions about LO concepts by evaluating Training Programs	158
Table 5.19	Differences in perceptions about LO Concepts by following up of Training Programs	161
Table 5.20	Differences in Perceptions about LO's Concepts by the availability of Organizational Structure	162
Table 5.21	Relation Between LO's Concept and Personal Characteristics : Managerial Factors of Managers Perception's	168

LIST OF FIGURES

		PAGE
Figure 2.1	Single-and Double-Loop Learning	55
Figure 2.2	The conceptual frame work of the study	82
Figure 3.1	Population Densities in Gaza Strip 2012	90
Figure 3.2	Map of Palestine	91
Figure 3.3	Population Pyramid in the Palestinian Territory End Year, 2012	92
Figure4.1	Sampling Process	112

ABBREVIATIONS

ASTD	American Society for Training and Development
ANC	Antenatal Care
DLOQ	Dimension of the Learning Organization Questionnaire
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
EGH	European Gaza Hospital
GS	Gaza Strip
HRD	Human Resources Development
HRH	Human Resources for Health
HD	Human Development
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LO	Learning Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOH	Ministry of Health
NHRD	National of Human Resource Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OJT	On-the-job training
OD	Organizational Development
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Centre Bureau of Statistics
PNC	Post Natal Care
UN	United Nations

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNRWA	United Nation Relief and Works Agency
WB	West Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

ORGANISASI PEMBELAJARAN DAN PEMBANGUNAN SOSIAL: SATU KAJIAN KES DI HOSPITAL EROPAH GAZA – SEMENANJUNG GAZA

ABSTRAK

Pengenalan konsep organisasi pembelajaran adalah sangat penting kepada organisasi yang menjalani perubahan asas dalam proses pembangunan dan organisasi yang sistematik akan menggabungkan perubahan - perubahan tersebut untuk menilai amalan serta perancangan pembangunan pekerja di organisasi mereka. Konsep ini juga dapat digunakan untuk meningkatkan keupayaan organisasi untuk menjalankan misinya. Oleh yang demikian, para pekerja organisasi awam di Semenanjung Gaza perlu mengambil langkah-langkah penting untuk memenuhi harapan organisasi dalam meningkatkan prestasi mereka agar dapat menyumbang dalam pembangunan masyarakat.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kebolehpakaian konsep organisasi pembelajaran (LO) di institusi Hospital Eropah Gaza (EGH), Semenanjung Gaza. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat menggalakkan perkembangan organisasi di dalam premis EGH, mentransformasi EGH menjadi sebuah LO, di samping meningkatkan keberkesanan peruntukan dalam perkhidmatan kesihatan ke arah pembangunan sosial yang lebih baik di Gaza. Kajian ini mensasarkan pengurus dari kepakaran yang berbeza di EGH. Kedua-dua pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif telah digunakan untuk pengumpulan data. Soal selidik menggunakan lima disiplin Senge dan dimensi-dimensi dalam Model Soal Selidik Organisasi Pembelajaran (DLOQ) telah diedarkan kepada 65 pengurus di Hospital Eropah Gaza. Temubual telah diadakan dengan beberapa orang penting di Kementerian Kesihatan dan temubual berbeza juga diadakan dengan jawatankuasa pendidikan kesihatan serta kakitangan EGH. Program SPSS versi 19 telah digunakan untuk analisis data, di mana prosedur statistik yang

berbeza telah digunakan untuk analisis data termasuk menggunakan min, sisihan piawai dan peratusan, ujian *Chi-square* serta ANOVA.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa persepsi pengurus mengenai konsep LO melalui lima disiplin Senge adalah terarah kepada sistem pemikiran yang bermaksud bahawa mereka mempunyai tanggapan yang positif terhadap organisasi pembelajaran. Selain itu, persepsi pengurus mengenai konsep LO melalui DLOQ adalah terarah kepada prestasi organisasi, yang mana hal ini menunjukkan bahawa pengurus dan individu di setiap peringkat mengambil berat tentang prestasi organisasinya secara menyeluruh. Dapatan temubual pula menggambarkan bahawa EGH perlu merekabentuk cara-cara yang inovatif untuk mengubah amalan rutin EGH agar dapat menjadi sebuah organisasi pembelajaran.

Oleh itu, kajian ini ingin mengesyorkan agar pihak berkuasa Gaza melipatgandakan usaha ke arah peningkatan program-program latihan untuk para pekerja di samping pelaksanaan melalui amalan dan polisi Kementerian Kesihatan dalam rangka kerja perancangan strategik agar objektif pembangunan sosial melalui pembangunan organisasi dapat dicapai.

**LEARNING ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE
STUDY OF EUROPEAN GAZA HOSPITAL (EGH) – GAZA STRIP**

ABSTRACT

The introduction of the concept of learning organization is very important in organizations undergoing a fundamental change in their development process and organizations that systematically incorporate such changes in evaluating practices and planning how to develop the employees within their organizations they worked in. This concept is used to increase the ability of the organization to carry out its mission. Therefore, the public organizations in Gaza Strip the employees need crucial measures to meet their expectations to enhance their performance in order to contribute in their society's development.

This study aimed to examine the applicability of the Learning Organization concepts in the European Gaza Hospital (EGH) institute in Gaza. Thus, the study can promote the organizational development within the EGH premises and the transformation of the EGH into a LO, thus increasing the effectiveness of the provision in health services and towards a better social development in Gaza. The study targeted the managers from different specialists in EGH. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for the data collection. A questionnaire with the five disciplines of Senge and the dimensions of a learning organization questionnaire model (DLOQ) was distributed to 65 managers at the European Gaza Hospital. Interviews were conducted with the key informants in the Ministry of Health, and other different interviews were also conducted with the Health Education Committee and employees in the EGH. The SPSS program version 19 was used for data

analysis, where different statistical procedures were used for data analysis including using a mean, standard deviation and percentage, Chi-square test and ANOVA test.

The study findings showed that the managers perceptions about the concepts of the LO regarding to Senge five disciplines are going towards the systems thinking which means that they positively perceived the learning organization. Additionally, the managers' perceptions regarding to LO dimensions are going towards the organizational performance, which indicated that the all levels of managers and individuals are concerning the performance of their organization as a whole. The findings based on the interviews implies that the European Gaza Hospital is required to create innovative ways in order to change its routine practices for the Hospital to become a learning organization (LO).

Therefore, this study recommended that the key persons in Gaza have to work towards enhancing the training programs for the employees. As well as to be elaborated with the practices and policies within the Ministry of Health in a framework of a strategic planning, in their way to reach the objective of a social development through the organizations development.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

With the evolution of modern technology and complexity of life, people's demands and needs have increased considerably. Among those needs is the challenge of providing affordable health services to meet the raising expectations of people for whom an appropriate level of health care forms the cornerstone of societies. It follows then that health team members are responsible for the provision of health services that are at a satisfactory level to meet people's responsible demands. In doing so, hospitals are increasingly complex organizations and the creation of organizational learning within them is a significant challenge and requires cultural, structural and especially changes to be effected in the organizations' relationships with its political environment (Edge and Laiken, 2002).

The concept of a Learning Organization (LO) has attracted considerable attention from leading management scholars examining organizational behavior (Philips, 2003). During the last decade, the Learning Organization has become the aphorism in the field of organizational change and development (Bhatnagar, 2006). Organizations are increasingly required to become learning systems if they wish to thrive in a dynamic business arena. The ability and rate at which organizations can learn and react more quickly than their competitors, has emerged as a pre-eminent sustainable source of a competitive advantage (Jashapara, 2003).

Accordingly, there are significant strategic advantages in relation to organizations embracing a capability to acquire knowledge and learn at a more rapid

rate than their competitors and these organizations will be better placed to adapt to new conditions in a globalized and increasingly competitive world. These new kinds of organizations will have more knowledge, be more flexible, will be faster and stronger, with the capacity to adapt to changing environmental conditions in order to satisfy both workers and shareholders (Basim, Nejat, Harun Sesen and Haluk Korkmazurk, 2007). Accordingly, the ability of an organization to adapt to uncertain environments and change augers well for organizational survival and success (Torlak, 2004). In this context, managers within organizations have a responsibility to increase the ability and the level of consciousness of the staff members of an organization to lift their level of understanding to assist in managing the organization as well as its environment. Concomitantly, with managers taking on these new responsibilities, the managers by using best practices can make decisions which constantly attain and secure organizational goals.

Becoming an organization that engages all its members in active learning and provides mechanisms for the transfer and application of knowledge requires a collective mind shift at all levels (Terziovski, Howell, Sohal and Morrison, 2000). Understandably, such change is a complex, long-term undertaking. Therefore, a Learning Organization is best viewed as an ideal, a vision of what organizations might become. Organizations ought to recognize that continuous improvement-related activities create an environment for Learning Organization to occur (Terziovski, *et al.*, 2000).

Models from the late 1980s/early 1990s are still discussed in the recent literature and are regarded as the foundation of Learning Organization thinking (Kontoghiorghes, Awbrey and Feurig, 2005). Two of the most commonly referenced models are Senge's Fifth Discipline (1990) and Pedler, Burgoyne, and Boydell,

(1991). The two models offer essentially the same concepts to define a LO. However, there is a fundamental difference between the two models in that Senge argues that new skills and ways of viewing the organization must be developed, whereas Pedler *et al.* maintain that a Learning Organization can be established by merely changing the skills, practices and views already present.

Another model for implementing the Learning Organization constructs which support the creation of a Learning Organization is a learning organization profile based on the work of Marquard in 2000. According to Graham and Nafukho, (2007) this model assesses the level of Learning Organization in five main organizational systems as: Organization; Knowledge; Learning; Technology; and People.

Many authors had described many other models, such as the seven Dimensions of the Learning Organization which was developed by Watkins and Marsick (1996, 2003) and they formed the Dimension of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) which has been used in this Study. Senge (1990) identified five disciplines that enable organizations to move toward the ideal of a Learning Organization. These have been identified as system thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, R.B. and Smith, 1994). All five disciplines are concerned with a mind shift from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future (Chang and Lee, 2007). Accordingly, for an organization to become a Learning Organization, that implies an approach to organizational change and continuous improvement which demonstrates a capacity for change needs to be adopted and practiced.

Worldwide, in the context of health care, there are transformational requirements which are necessary. This can be attributed to an organization within health care being part of a larger system, and therefore a systemic process approach ought to be adopted which takes into consideration a number of power and influence-related relationships. It is only through a collective learning process which can allow the incorporation of all of the diverse factors within the system. Therefore, a cycle of experiential learning ought to be instigated and well managed (deBurca, 2000). For instance, hospitals are increasingly complex organizations and the creation of a Learning Organization system within them is a significant challenge and it necessitates changes to be made in an organization's structure and culture and in particular a change in an organization's relationship with its political environment (Edge and Liaken, 2002). Many transformational trials have been examined through the health sector and exercises reviewed since its establishment the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) in 1995. Although many learning and training programs have been conducted, as yet the results have not reached the desired outcome (Hamad, 2001).

1.2 Problem Statement

Gaza Strip is a part of the Palestinian society experiencing the critical socio-economic situation for more than sixty years, still threatened from Israeli occupation. This small area suffers from low wages and deteriorated economy, and depends on the givers and donors (Hamad, 2009). A low level of performance was noted with respect to the public organizations in Gaza, as indicated in the public organizations' inaugural evaluation report prepared by Sayigh and Shikaki (1999). The World Bank in its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2005), also reported that there are lower levels of performance which may be related to lower levels of

governance in the Palestinian organizations. Government officials in Palestine have made significant measures to improve the level of employees' performance.

Regardless the previously mentioned issues, in general, the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Gaza exhibit notable development trials in enhancing the employees' abilities and skills as a part of developing the society. Furthermore, the European Gaza Hospital (EGH) as a case study in this research is living in a changeable and unstable context, so it ought to be flexible and adaptable to these challenges. Some of these challenges include the new technologies related to the health sector, the lack of policies and the lack of attainable strategic planning (Hamad, 2009). Additionally, yet importantly, the implementation of training programs and the production of Human Resources for Health (HRH) are not linked to strategic planning which is the mechanism that balances the supply with needs and demands (Jubran, 2008). As means of addressing the low levels of performance training programs have been undertaken in the private and the public sectors. Employees within the public sector have experienced frustration after providing and/or receiving training courses with these training courses being undertaken as employees have not performed in the workplace as expected. Furthermore, managers of employees in the work field have also experienced frustration when staff members participate in training but then they do not use their new knowledge and skills to improve their level of performance. This all may lead to an increase in staff turnover or even to brain drain (Abed, 2007). Health providers can only perform at the level at which the system supports them, and it is the leaders and managers who are responsible for building and sustaining an organizational structure that enables providers to work at an expected level of performance. A lot of funds and staff time have been spent on training, with the expectation of improving the effectiveness and

efficiency of an organization's performance, but it is often not obvious that training has made any significant difference or improvement in performance (Jubran, 2008).

A Learning Organization adopts an essential social process, by encouraging interactions between many individuals which ultimately lead to decision-making which is well informed. Accordingly, an organization with a culture of learning can adapt well when it incorporates this learning as part of its day-to-day working practices. Therefore, the practices of re-use ought to equal or surpass re-invent as an advantageous behavior for employees to adopt.

There is a lack of studies about the Learning Organization concept in Palestine, especially in Gaza. Furthermore, the training in Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) is still a questionable issue. Accordingly, this study tries to shed light on the issue as to what extent the European Gaza Hospital (EGH) promotes the learning of its members and benefits from their learning and transforms itself according to the needs. And to what extent the European Gaza Hospital utilizes the concept of a Learning Organization.

This study will contribute through providing a conceptual framework to identify the characteristics of a Learning Organization in the Palestinian context. This research endeavor will also explore the factors promoting the development of a Learning Organization, and determine whether it is due to individual factors and/or to organizational factors such as the culture of the organization, the system and its policies. In other words, this study examines organizational development and helps to integrate learning and training into a wider organizational context. Thus, it is expected to increase the impact of learning and training and promote the utilization

of training programs which are frequently provided at the MOH premises, which are, unfortunately, still perceived to have little if any impact on performance.

From the existence of these issues it is obvious that there are evidence of gaps in the present status such as the traditional nonsystematic guidance to the managers in the government, and their perception with the learning organizations concepts. In order to fill these gaps, this study determines the importance of the training and learning in increasing the abilities and skills of employees. And to change the concept that the investment in human promptly could not be considered wasting money if it channeling in a systematic manner. This improvement of human capital will influence the wellbeing which in turn affects the development of the Palestinian society.

1.3 Objectives of this Study

The overall aim of this Study is to examine the applicability of the Learning Organization concepts to the European Gaza Hospital (EGH) -related institutions in the Gaza Strip (GS). Thus, this research endeavor can promote organizational development within the EGH premises and support the transformation of the European Gaza Hospital into a Learning Organization, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the provision in health services for the desired outcome of better social development in Gaza. Accordingly, the objectives of this Study have been specifically identified as follows:

- 1) To determine the personal factors of managers which promote the development of a Learning Organization within the European Gaza Hospital;

- 2) To analyze the perceptions of managers regarding a Learning Organization within the European Gaza Hospital -related premises; and
- 3) To provide a set of recommendations that could be derived from the organizational factors that promotes the development of a Learning Organization.

1.4 Research Questions

Three broad research questions will guide and provide the roadmap of this study. These questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the personal factors of managers which promote the development of a Learning Organization in the European Gaza Hospital?
- 2) How do managers perceive a Learning Organization as having the capacity to influence the performance of employees?
- 3) What are the recommendations that could be derived from the organizational factors that promote the development of a Learning Organization?

1.5 Significance of this Study

The concept of a Learning Organization in Gaza has not been given a specific pattern of participative management. According to that argument, a Learning Organization will provide a range of benefits including the development of effective leadership skills. The significances of this study are as follows:

- 1- Findings of this study will allow employees to gain management skills in working as a team.

- 2- This study will provide a platform to improve professional development.
- 3- This study seeks to fill the gaps between theory and practice in order to solve organizational problems.
- 4- This study will introduce a conception of Learning Organization at the European Gaza Hospital which has a desired outcome of increasing the levels of effectiveness of the provided health services and help the transition from recovery status to development in the Palestinian society.
- 5- This research is conducted to help the public organizations in Gaza to play the significant expected role in Palestine's economic development and this is a serious concern. A series of serious problems have been identified which includes a shortage of qualified professionals and lack of appropriate job training for employees.
- 6- This study arises from increased interest in Human Resources Development (HRD) worldwide and its importance to the health services-related organizations.
- 7- The research also will add to the literature for using the approach of the seven dimensions of a Learning Organization as developed by Watkins and Marsick (1996, 2003), and Senge's five disciplines have been adopted in this study to examine a Learning Organization at the European Gaza Hospital.

1.6 Organization of this Study

This study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter outlines the general introduction, and provides a brief background regarding the subject of this Study. The researcher has illustrated the problem statement, discussed the objectives

of this study, and formulated research questions which serve as a road map of the study. The research significance and overall structure of the thesis will also be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The second chapter includes two parts. The first part covers the literature review related to the study topic and its variables. The chapter concludes by discussing previous studies related to LOs which provide the basis for identifying gaps that will be fulfilled by this research. The second part outlines the conceptual framework whereby the researcher provides a schematic diagram of the conceptual framework for this research endeavor.

The third chapter provides the background in relation to the area of study. It provides a discussion about the population. This chapter also provides geographical and socio-economical information as well as examines the political situation, health situation and health care services in Palestine.

The fourth chapter describes the methodology which includes the study's design, population, sample, instruments, pilot study as well as validity and reliability of the study instruments, and takes into account ethical considerations, and statistical analysis. Generally, this chapter explains the manner in which the research was conducted.

The fifth chapter discusses the findings of this study. Both quantitative and qualitative factors affecting a Learning Organization and social development are discussed, and each factor is analyzed. This chapter presents the findings of this study, which are organized according to the questionnaire design and the interviews conducted. This chapter also shows the profile of the respondents. It identifies the

percentages of respondents according to their gender, age, marital status, education levels, work sectors, job categories and tenure.

The sixth chapter concludes, and provides recommendations based on the findings reported in chapter five. The chapter also points to areas for possible future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter integrates the literature review which highlights the work undertaken on those variables affecting the Learning Organization perception, and their inter-relatedness is acknowledged for this study's conceptual framework. Therefore, in aligning with the conceptual framework the concepts of Learning Organizations (LOs) and the particulars in relation to social development have been highlighted in order to outline clearly the context of this current research endeavor as supported by prior studies with respect to a LO and social development.

First, the chapter begins by providing details related to social development which involves the hierarchy of learning through social development, the Social Development Theory, the objectives of social development, human centered approach, human development, human resource development (HRD), Harbison and Myers' indicators of HRD, strategic human resource development, the role of human resource development in organizational development, organizations as the skills of society, health and sustainable development, education and health in economic development, and the summary of social development principles. The second part of the chapter examines the concept of Learning Organization (LO) and discusses the definitions, importance of LO, LO theory, LO models, characteristics of a LO, and organizational performance. Finally, the third part presents the conceptual framework employed by this thesis.

2.2 The Hierarchy of Learning through Social Development

According to Cleveland and Jacobs (1999) the chain in social development in human life can roughly be compared in parallel to the chain of development in biology from the smallest building blocks of life from the size of atoms and molecules to organs and cells and living organisms. It is through social development that there are interactions between individuals with the creation of organized relationships. These relationships are represented in society, which is claimed to be a field of life. In Gaza society as in all other societies, different groups of systems are joined to establish organizations which are capable of undertaking specialized types of work.

As the process of learning process occurs simultaneously at a physical, mental and social level, in attaining an actual mental level there is a natural sequence from the initial physical level of an experience and this process of learning increases the level of understanding. In that way, the public service organizations in the Palestinian society has developed over time through a process of trial and error through experimentation in the physical sense. In engaging in this process, it leads to new physical skills being acquired enabling humans to utilize their energies more effectively and efficiently. In social terms, this process leads to learning organizational skills and the mastery of these skills and attitudes. Furthermore, it leads to the establishment of systems and institutions enabling humans to control their interactions more effectively with others and more broadly with other societies. Mentally, this process can lead to facts being organized as information. It then follows that there is a process of understanding this information which is galvanized as thoughts.

Therefore, the learning process outcome is to advance the efficiency and effectiveness of the lives of humankind through the organization of systems such as information and social systems as well as improving physical skills. The process is a cycle in that there is continuous learning from experiences from the past which can then be applied to learn new activities in the future.

Social development comprises two aspects which are interrelated; learning and its application. The social process is based on conceptual knowledge and it accelerates development which minimizes errors and imbalances and as such is a conscious development. In developing the collective, it is observed as a subconscious act. It initiates as a physical experience that in time leads to a conscious understanding of the process (Cleveland and Jacobs, 1999).

Accordingly, society uncovers better and new ways to fulfill its obligations and society develops organized mechanisms which are utilized to communicate that knowledge ultimately achieves economic and social goals. The process of knowledge is one of discovery which increases the level of human consciousness and the process of application of this knowledge develops social organization.

It follows that the process of learning from society's organized physical experiences requires higher levels of mental effort to attain shared ideas or principles, with the accumulation of information gained through the process of social interaction. This information is then synthesized as conceptual knowledge. As such, this abstract conceptual knowledge can be generalized and applied to other fields, in other places and at other times. Accordingly, a human's conceptual mind can be considered as the highest and most conscious faculty a human possesses. This conceptual knowledge of the organization of ideas has great influence over society

when this conceptual knowledge is organized into a system. In that regard, the systematic organization of knowledge is known as a theory (Cleveland and Jacobs, 1999).

The following section presents the studies from literature with regard to the theory of social development.

2.2.1 Social Development Theory

Accordingly to Cleveland and Jacobs (1999), an inclusive theory of social development would bestow a conceptual framework to uncover the underlying common principles to the process of development in different types of activities, in different places throughout the world in different periods of time. A theory would also present a framework to better understand the relationships that are in existence between the accumulated banks of knowledge produced by a number of differing types of disciplines. In relation to the examination social development, in context with a theory, Cleveland and Jacobs (1999) stated “if pursued to its logical conclusions, it would lead to not just a theory of social development, but a unifying theory of knowledge - which does not yet exist in any field of science or art.”

A theory of development ought to commence with an examination of the crucial aspects of the knowledge and the characteristics of development itself and not be concerned with the policies and goals to encourage such development, as development itself is a process. Accordingly, development is not seen a set of results or programs or policies.

The formulation and use of a valid theory is considered important for any research-based analysis, as it is considered to provide confirmation of the analysis. In other words it is useful for testing and it provides the potential for confirming the

theory. Crucially, a theory is required to identify and specify the relationships in the models. Furthermore, an applicable theory can communicate not only what ought to be undertaken. It can also outline the way in which it can be accomplished as well as setting out the process to obtain it.

The process of social development can be summarized as organizing the activities and energies of humans at a higher level to attain an outcome of enhanced results. In this context it is through the utilization of the potential of humankind that development is enhanced. In the absence of an applicable theory to explain the concept of social development, a process of experimentation by way of trial and error would result, with an increased level of risk of failure leading to exceptionally uneven progress. This has been evidenced by the dismal consequences of transition strategies in many places throughout the world including the halting of progress of many developing countries within Asia and Africa, with the undesirable effect of increasing the income gap between those nations which are developed and those which are not, with its associated problems including linkages to violence and crime. This provides substantiation that humankind is ardently following a process in the absence of the full understanding necessary to supply appropriate levels of governance to properly guide it.

Therefore, an examination and advances in the Development Theory provide an ideal platform for enhancing humankind's social success rate. Crucially, (Cleveland and Jacobs, 1999) claimed that the emergence of a robust theoretical framework in relation to social development ought to provide the necessary knowledge to deal with these weaknesses. In addition, it would in time lead to the discovery of the unbounded creative potential of humankind.

The following section discusses the previous studies in relation of the common objectives of social development.

2.2.2 The Objectives of Social Development

In examining social development Bilance (1997, p.65) stated “Social Development is the promotion of a sustainable society that is worthy of human dignity by empowering marginalized groups, women and men, to undertake their own development, to improve their social and economic position and to acquire their rightful place in society.....”

The objectives of social development can be summarized as providing a platform to empower these marginalized groups of men and women by eradicating poverty, and optimizing the conditions for employment and social integration. With these three main pillars in mind, social development has evolved to include the following 10 commitments of the Social Summit (United Nations 1995, pp. 8- 21):

1. Create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment to enable social development;
2. Eradicate poverty in the world;
3. Promote full employment;
4. Promote social integration based on the protection of human rights, non-discrimination, and participation of all people;
5. Ensure equity between women and men;
6. Provide universal education, health; respecting and promoting our common and particular cultures; preserving the essential bases of people-centered sustainable development, and contributing to the full development of human resources to social development with the purpose of these activities being to

eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment and foster social integration;

7. Accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries;
8. Ensure structural adjustment programs include social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full employment, and enhancing social integration;
9. Increase resources allocated to social development; and
10. Improve the framework for international, regional and sub-regional cooperation for social development.

The next section presents the human-centered approach towards social development which has been derived from the literature about the importance of the involvement of human resources in the social development process.

2.2.3 Human-Centered Approach

Studies have placed a focus on human development as a concept which is different and distinct from economic growth. This distinction can be useful when creating strategies and priorities. One of the studies which have conducted by Cleveland and Jacobs (1999) asserted that there is a vast amount of evidence indicating that a higher level of growth in a nation's economy does not necessarily translate into a prompt improvement in the living standards for those in the population who live in poorer sections of the community. Therefore, to achieve an improvement in the living standards, strategies ought to be introduced which do not exclusively place and emphasis on growth. Importantly, this distinction places a

focus on the strategies and priorities for development, and not on the critical nature itself of the process of development

Therefore, a comprehensive theory ought to place an emphasis on being human centered. It should not be viewed solely from the perspective of asserting that humankind is the rightful recipient of social progress. With that in mind, it also ought to analyze humankind as the cause and, therefore, the primary motivation for the driving force for development.

As development is observed as the process of humankind developing, it can be viewed as the people's energy being galvanized in the search for conditions to meet their aspirations, and it is a process which operates as the driving force for development. Therefore, the level of comprehension and awareness can determine the direction social movement takes. There are a number of crucial determinants influencing the development process including the level of education and skills of humans, their philosophies and the quality of their values and the intensity of their aspirations, as well as their ability to access information.

Accordingly, (Cleveland and Jacobs, 1999) claimed "the same principles of development are applicable to the development of all levels and units of human existence..." Primarily, humankind is noted as a physical instrument employed for manual labor; similar to other animals used for work in earlier millennia. Today, the development of society is to such a degree that people's mental capabilities have more of a role to play with a thousand-fold increase in humankind's productivity. This process of increasing productivity is ongoing as humankind presently only utilizes a small fraction of their social potential and their opportunities. With this in mind, only a small fraction of the potential of societies is utilized. Furthermore,

these limitations are not physical. The impediments in aspiring to higher levels of accomplishment are limitations in knowledge, attitudes and vision. A valid development theory, therefore, ought to be able to provide an explanation in examining the process of development for the fundamental function of these factors which are seen as intangible (Cleveland and Jacobs, 1999).

In the next section, the study elaborates what written in the previous studies in related of the measures and challenges in the development of the manpower.

2.2.4 Human Development (HD)

In broad terms human development (HD) can be defined as the process of broadening the choices of humankind, by enhancing their freedom and capabilities and making it possible for people to live a long life with a healthy lifestyle, as well as the right to be able to access knowledge and an adequate standard of living. This enables people to participate in the life of their community and decisions affecting their lives (United Nations Development Program, 2007/2008). For many countries the Human Development Reports (HDRs) also include statistics of the Human Development Index (HDI) as well as other data which is related to human development (HD). Consequently, HDRs have been produced nearly every year. These reports apply the concept of HD to diverse themes, such as the environment, gender, poverty, globalization, cultural liberties and migration.

According to the concept of HD, income is clearly only one of the options that people would like to have, albeit an important one. But it is not the sum total of their lives. Development must, therefore, be more than just the expansion of income and wealth. Its focus ought to be on humankind and to represent development a measure of wealth should be utilized. This analysis would be deemed appropriate as

there is an assumption that the benefit to society such as the quality of life, improved health, and education is associated with greater wealth.

In relation to development, an increased awareness evolved in the late 1980s that the frequently-used economic measures were far too limited. It was this level of awareness that provided the impetus for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to develop the HDI as above-mentioned. The HDI integrates three dimensions of development with respect to the well-being of humankind: a long life and healthier lifestyle; a decent living standard; and knowledge and education.

In examining the UNDP report (2006), it utilized measures to analyze the extent to which a government can satisfy the need of its people. In that regard it examined factors such as an improvement in health, security, income, gender equity with respect to employment, the diffusion of technology, access to energy, and importantly it also examined the level of poverty. The UNDP (2010) report the HDI classifies countries into four categories based on the achievement of these needs for its citizens. These categories are (a) countries of very high human development (b) countries of high human development (c) countries of medium human development and (d) countries of low human development.

The first HDR in 1990 was released with the simply stated premise that has guided all subsequent reports: "People are the real wealth of a nation." By backing up this assertion with an abundance of empirical data and a new way of thinking about and measuring development, the HDR has had a profound impact on the development of policies around the world (UNDP, 2010).

The HDR (2013) entitled "the rise of the south: human progress in a diverse world" examines the profound shift in global dynamics driven by the fast-rising new

powers of the developing world and its long-term implications for human development” (UNDP, 2013, p. 1). The report indicates that levels of economic, social and institutional development differ widely between countries; however, every country has its own way of developing its human resources (HR).

In order to achieve the aspirations of development and growth, all countries have adopted the concept of HRD as a national policy. Furthermore, all countries have attempted to diagnose the problems in relation to education, and the economic, socio-cultural and HRD systems. They search for what could and should be done in response to such a trend (Cho and McLean, 2009). In this respect many countries have adopted a certain model to develop their citizens. However, the concept of a framework for a National Human Resource Development (NHRD) will remain the only way in which governments can achieve better outcomes such as social conditions nationally.

The following section discusses on the importance of human resource to be developed towards social development.

2.2.5 Human Resource Development (HRD)

The basis for a learning organization is the individuals themselves. And it is through the individuals that such learning can take place. Within organizations this learning can take place in the form of the processes of HRD. According to Wilson (2005, p. 10) HRD is the “learning organization experience in a definite time period to increase the possibility of improving job performance growth.” In examining the philosophy underlying HRD, Pattanayak (2006) claimed that “the HRD philosophy is that people perform better when they feel trusted and see meaning in what they

are doing. People want to know the possibilities for their own growth and career opportunities.”

Currently, employees’ development is integrated into an organization’s HRD strategy in response to the requirement for improved levels of performance in order to gain a competitive edge. In that regard, obtaining a specific status is not the ultimate objective for a Learning Organization as a LO continually strives to develop through perpetually adapting in order to deal with the environmental changes whilst at the same time moving towards its set objectives. On the other hand, these HRD strategies can also bring about an awareness concerning individual competencies, and a willingness to learn and obtain new skills and provide the foundation for employees to perform in an environment of team synergies which could be utilized to an organization’s advantage. Accordingly, an organization’s HRD ought to be synchronized with the other systems and processes of the organization. This would provide a working environment to ensure the transition from one phase to another during the organization’s transition towards its ultimate set objectives was as smooth as possible. This type of an alignment and articulation is likely to occur in an organization when there is a match between the frequent sharing of knowledge and a high level of interest, and this is another trait of a LO.

Wilson (2005, p.117) noted that organizational success is associated with the development of individual capabilities through effectively using the management of knowledge. The strategy of HRD in any organization ought to be concerned with enhancing workforce capabilities both qualitatively and quantitatively. In other words there is a requirement for the workforce to have the necessary skills and knowledge for undertaking their job. As such, education and training are considered

to provide the foundation for success in that regard. There is no single example in the world where people may have made progress and advancement without knowledge and education. In this respect Armstrong (2003) stated that HRD is a major component of development. Therefore, in accordance with the findings of (Hareli and Tzafir, 2006; Hassan and Tzafir, 2006; Hassan, 2006; Kim, 2004), an investment in HRD by organizations is a necessary requirement for an organization's growth and is, therefore, essential for an organization's development and for organizational success.

Based on these opinions, increasingly many countries are giving special consideration to their HRD; with organizations spending vast amounts of money on continuing professional education and training activities, in order to improve the performance of their workforce.

The next section discusses the indicators of human resource development and takes from the literature Harbison and Myers Indicators of HRD.

2.2.6 Harbison and Myers Indicators of HRD

An early definition of HRD clearly expanded the operational boundaries of HRD beyond that of the organization, by placing HRD as a major component contributor to national development and competitiveness.

In an attempt to develop a fairly simple composite index to distinguish between countries in terms of development, Harbison and Myers (1964) used seven measures as follows: the number of teachers at the primary and secondary levels of education per 10,000 persons; engineers and scientists per 10,000 persons; physicians and dentists per 10,000 persons; percentage of the population aged