An investigation into the realization dimension of learning organization

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Abstract

The general goal of this research is to study the rate of realization of the dimensions of the learning organization in University of Tehran. This study is the type of survey and descriptive research. The statistical society of the present study includes the personnel working in University of Tehran and according to the recent statistics in the year 2011 the number of them is 130 people. In this study the sample volume selected based on the society volume. The data collecting materials are researcher made questionnaire. Kalmogruff-smirnuf test and the of variances loan test parametrics tests including t-test were used to data analysis. The findings show that the personnel of University of Tehran have made personal skill and intellectual pattern dimensions higher than mid-level, common landscape and collective learning and systematic thought lower than mid-level. Meanwhile, the rate of realizing the dimensions of learner Organization University of Tehran has been lower than middle level. Results of the present study shows that the University of Tehran which are the part of the sport organizations of the country are far from the principles of the learning organization considering its structural and management characteristics which is affected by the management structure in Iran.

Keywords: learning organization, Dimension of learning organization, University of Tehran;

1. Introduction

In today’s competitive world, organizations that can continuously adapt to environmental changes, will survive. Environmental changes make organizations constantly hunt for the best ways in order to adapt to their environment, and therefore to gain competitive advantage (Somerville& McConnell, 2004). Focusing on employees’ continuous learning is a way to reach sustainable competitive advantage and achieve organizational goals effectively. To Garvin, learning organization is the organization which is able to create, acquire, and transfer knowledge and behaves in a way that reflects new knowledge and views.

In Marquardt’s opinion, a learning organization is the one that can learn collectively and changes itself in a way that can collect, manage and use information in such an effective way that the organization succeeds in accomplishing its goal (Marquardt, 1996). Singe (1994) proposed five principles of learning organization that are the followings:

1. Individual skill: paint a rational picture on what one expects to gain individually (individual vision). This picture is followed by a rational evaluation of the current status.
2. Mental scheme: make a person aware of perceptions and propensities influencing thought. Individuals will be more able to get routines done and make decisions, through talking and considering mental pictures.
3. Shared vision: have people consider shared goals. Individuals commit their organization or group, by painting a common picture about their desired future as well as creating principles and strategies to reach the picture.
4. Team learning: the command of group interaction is about team learning. Teams transform their collective thought, using techniques like discussion and skillful negotiation, and also learn to mobilize their power in order to achieve shared goals. This way, a group can gain more ability and understanding than individuals themselves. Systematic thinking: through this command, individuals learn to understand change and cohesion in a better way and deal effectively with forces forming the consequences of our works. Systematic thinking is based on a theory concerning the complexity of system tendency to grow and survive (Senge, 1994). Safari et al (2008), studying the dimensions of learning organization at physical education organization, concluded that the physical education organization didn’t pay enough attention to learning at both individual, group, and organizational level. This organization also was weak in learning strategic leadership, merged systems, empowerment and connection with system. This study aimed, in general, to investigate the extent to which the dimensions of learning organization at the University of Tehran were realized.

2. Methodology

In the present study, the descriptive method was used. Statistical population consists of the University of Tehran’s employees and 100 persons were selected as the sample. Some questionnaires were filled out completely. To collect data, a researcher made questionnaire, including 53 fundamental questions based on the five main aspects of learning organization (individual skill, mental scheme, shared vision, team learning and systematic thinking), was used. To determine the questionnaire’s reliability, cronbach’s alpha was used (%79), and to determine its validity, content validity (experts) was used.

3. Findings

To analyze data, descriptive and inferential techniques were used. To determine data being normal and homoscedasticity, ; and tests were used, respectively. Parametric tests like t test were also used.

1. To what extent did the University of Tehran’s employees realize the individual skill dimension?
The calculated t test was bigger than the amount of the table at level %5, indicating that the individual skill dimension was realized significantly. The mean and standard deviation of the knowledge creation function were 3/29 and 0/46, respectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that the University of Tehran’s employees realized this dimension significantly.

2. To what extent did the University of Tehran’s employees realize the mental scheme dimension?
The calculated t test was bigger than the amount of the table at level %5, indicating that the mental scheme dimension was realized significantly. The mean and standard deviation of the mental scheme dimension were 3/02 and 0/64, respectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that the University of Tehran’s employees realized this dimension significantly.

3. To what extent did the University of Tehran’s employees realize the shared vision dimension?
The calculated t test was negative and smaller than the amount of the table at level %5, meaning the null hypothesis was confirmed and the alternate hypothesis was rejected. The mean and standard deviation of the shared vision dimension were 2/52 and 0/431, respectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that the University of Tehran’s employees realized this dimension significantly.

4. To what extent did the University of Tehran’s employees realize the team learning dimension?
The calculated t test was smaller than the amount of the table at level %5, meaning the null hypothesis was confirmed and the alternate hypothesis was rejected. The mean and standard deviation of the shared vision dimension were 2/89 and 0/751, respectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that the University of Tehran’s employees realized this dimension, but it was lower than the mean.

5. To what extent did the University of Tehran’s employees realize the systematic thinking dimension?
It can be observed in the table below that the calculated t test was negative and smaller than the amount of the table at level %5, meaning the null hypothesis was confirmed and the alternate hypothesis was rejected. The mean and
standard deviation of the systematic thinking dimension were 2.04 and 0.951, respectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that the University of Tehran’s employees realized this dimension, but it was lower than the mean.

6. To what extent did the University of Tehran’s employees, generally, realize the dimensions of learning organization?

The calculated t test was bigger than the amount of the table at level %5, meaning the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was confirmed. The mean and standard deviation were 2.94 and 0.531, respectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that the University of Tehran’s employees realized the dimensions of learning organization to a lower extent than the mean.

The findings show that the University of Tehran, as an educational organization that is influenced by the managerial structure of Iran, is far away from the principles of learning organization. As indicated by the findings, two dimensions out of five dimensions of learning organization, namely, individual skill and mental scheme were significantly realized at the University of Tehran. The three other dimensions (shared vision, team learning and systematic thinking) were lower than the mean. Therefore, considering the information, it can be inferred that the dimensions of learning organization at the University of Tehran were realized to a lower extent than the mean.

The slow process of educational assessment, the lack of attention to meritocracy and the fact that promotion system is not clear cause problems like the lack of motivation in the employees. On the one hand, the University of Tehran doesn’t attempt to establish a system intending to improve its employees’ knowledge. On the other hand, it seems that the employees themselves don’t have incentive to do so. It seems that the preliminaries of organizational learning won’t be provided unless creative ideas are followed by radical changes at workplace. It also should be noticed that the University of Tehran’s aims, strategies, structures, procedures, leaders should reinforce individual learning and system learning and achievement. It falls to organizational leaders to introduce and present organizational learning to employees in a practical way.

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