

An Overview of Dimensions of Learning Organization

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Abstract

Learning organization (LO) is a new concept in management. It was conceptualized by Senge (1990) and theorized by Watkins and Marsick (1993). Senge proposed 5 dimensions as characteristics, but Watkins and Marsick stated it into 7 dimensions and 2 key performance or output. The main objectives of this study are to postulate, explicitly describe, and provide an overview of the dimensions of learning organizations (DLO). Whereas, it adopted a systematic literature review examining the research method. It is resumed that 19 articles were collected from Google Scholar, Sci-Hub, and Proquest and these were systematically analyzed based on theoretical and behavioral perspectives. The limitations of this study are the applied convenience approach for the collection of articles and the research design method. The dimensions of LO are not far different from the field and organization-wise as there are different learning cultures. The findings show that most dimensions are acceptable, reliable, and valid relationships with an organizational learning culture, and in conclusion, DLO has significance different over the demographically. This study assists all kinds of organizational learning human research development or organizational development by identifying dimensions of LO and developed skills, attitudes, and behavior of employees and building up continuous competency of the organization in the long term aim.

Keywords

Dimensions of learning organization, Learning organization, Organizational learning, Culture, Performance

Introduction

This era is highly competitive in the business world. Customer interest, social phenomenon, technology, political, legal, and so on are rapidly changing. This turbulent environment creates challenges for the organization. Ultimately, organizations must enhance their competency to cope with these challenges. Consequently, the learning organization theory has been developed as an instrument for solving problems in contemporary management theory. In this regard, the learning organization enhanced its capacities to learn, adapt, and change and embraces learning as a culture that continuously acquires and shares knowledge in a company by all employees (Kumpikaité, 2008). Learning would be considered always as a means of improving the performance of an organization.

Learning organization (LO) is a new concept of management theory coined by Peter M. Senge in the late 1990s, when he published his book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice*

of the Learning Organization. He proposed five dimensions of learning organization such as team learning, shared vision, personal mastery, mental model, and system thinking. Learning organization to create an organization's future by expanding its competitiveness capacity. In organizations, people to create the results truly desire to continually expand their capacity. They nurtured their thinking as new and expansive patterns and set free collection aspirations and they are continually learning to see whole together (Senge, 1990).

The concept of the learning organization is an increasing area of interest in the fields of human resource development (HRD), management, schools, and so on (Song et al., 2009). The term learning organization refers to the new knowledge constantly acquired, disseminated, and shared by employees in an organization. Whether they attempt to apply their knowledge in performing work tasks and decision-making (Ashal et al., 2023). Indeed in a learning organization to help their company, employees adapt to unpredictable change than rivals can underpinning continuously acquiring, creating, and transforming knowledge as culture (Garvin et al., 2008).

LO is an organization to empowers people (i.e. managers and employees) of an organization to cope with a dynamic and turbulent business environment for competitive advantages that consistently develop its capacities for the creation of employees' future (Tabatabaei & Ghorbi, 2014). In an organization with the aim of improvement, change, and transformation against the challenges LO inspires, excels, and facilitates a continuous learning process for the members (Goula et al., 2020).

However, often organizations expect that will take place continually learning and knowledge creation and promote learning in groups their adapted knowledge and ensure the learning throughout the organization (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Thus, the process of becoming LO underpins the individual capacities of the organization (Sayed & Edgar, 2019). Primarily, the learning organization is individual learning while both inside and outside of the located individual's knowledge (Örtenblad, 2001). Furthermore, researchers need to know the dimensionality of the LO concept and its relationship with other organizational variables from the research purposes and theoretical perspective (Yang et al., 2004).

Especially, in learning organization pace of historical development steps can be taken as published in 1978 "Organizational Learning: a Theory of Action Perspective Reading" by Argyris and Schön, in 1990 "The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization" by Peter M. Senge, and in 1993 "Sculpting the learning organization: lessons in the art and science of systematic change" by Victoria J. Marsick and Karen E. Watkins. These historical phenomena are landmarks in the management field.

Statement of the Research Problem

The business world is changing rapidly. This may raise tremendous challenges for the organization's competitive entity. Consequently, the researchers have developed the learning organization theory as a diagnostic tool for retaining the competitive power of an organization. Primarily LO is concerned with learning culture, atmosphere, learning, adapting, change, and creativity with aims to build of future of the organization. Indeed there have been intended various indifference variables. These are known as characteristics factors or dimensions of learning organization. Even, scholars have been struggling to identify and assessment of the factors that comprise and differentiate LO from other firms (Kim et al., 2015).

The literature reviews have expected that the dimensions of LO are different types. Such as some scholars have been mentioned by Senge (1990) five, Marsick & Watkin (1993) seven, Orteland (2002) four, and so on. Hence, there need to evaluate and constitute confirmation about uniformity and non-uniformity of universal standards of dimensions of the learning organization.

Dimensions outlined by the learning organization scales (Tortorella et al., 2015). In this regard, there need to identify the dimensions of learning organization for organization resilience. There are different spheres of organization as goals. These dimensions affect the organization's formulation of strategies in organization. Thus, this study endeavored to identify and comparatively evaluate the dimensions of learning organization from different perspectives on learning organization theory.

Research Question

This research study has raised questions as:

1. Are the dimensions of learning organization in overall organization's uniformity?
2. Are the dimensions of learning organization significant all over the demographically?
3. What are the dimensions of learning organization sector-wise?
4. How do dimensions of learning organization affect

Research Objectives

Dimensions of learning organization concern to development of competitive power of human capital by ensuring entity of learning, adapt and creativity of people. So human resource management (HRM) needs to know about the identity of the DLO of an organization. This study has endeavored to identify and evaluate the characteristics/dimensions that define LO. Hence, this study's objectives are:

- a) To postulate of dimensions of learning organization.
- b) To explicitly evaluate dimensions of learning organization.
- c) To overview of dimensions of learning organization.

Limitations of Study

Despite of literature review exploring and evaluating on dimensions of learning organization, this study has taken all sources of literature on convenient methods by downloading online using the internet, during where period of 1990 to 2023. It is resumed that several articles were collected from Google Scholar, Sci-Hub, and Prequest Severe.

This study adopted a systematic theoretical analysis and behavioral bases primarily concerning seven dimensions and two key performances developed by Watkins and Marsick (2003). However, the literature represents different organizational sectors i.e. enterprises, education, hospitals, and services, as well as profit and non-profit organizations concluding Malaysia, the Netherlands, the United States, Brazil, Korea, China, and so on.

Literature Review

Learning organization practices and knowledge creation are critical drivers of firms' innovation performance (Laeque et al., 2017). Thus, learning organizations represent a potentially significant evolution of organizational culture (Senge, 1990). Likewise, Dawood, et al. (2015) argued that a group of people having the lean constant ability to enhance learning in organizational culture is a learning organization. These organizations are analyzed, screened, built up, and united with set aims and goals in the LO processes.

Learning organization can create a possible opportunity for learning individually and in groups, then implies study results in organization. It transforms knowledge from individual to team or group, team to organizational level, and organizational learning anchored it into concrete values, vision, and goals (Awasthy & Gupta, 2012).

Dei et al., (2024) explained that LO places where people continually expand their capacity to create the results truly desire by where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where the collection of aspirations is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. But for knowledge transfer in an institutionalized process is needed for the organization's top management support.

In previous, in terms of the evolution of learning organization theory Senge (1990) proclaimed that learning organization contains five dimensions as characteristics in his published 1990s book *Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. He proposed five dimensions of learning organization such as- team learning, shared vision, personal mastery, mental model, and system thinking. In the first dimension team learning: encourages team member dialogue, discussion, knowledge sharing, and collective working and solving problems. The second dimension is a shared vision: A common understanding aligns individuals to organizational goals and values among employees. The third dimension is the mental model: the underlying assumptions and beliefs that shape perceptions and values among the organization, The Fourth dimension is personal mastery: the commitment of individual or personal and professional growth to overall organizational capability, and finally fifth dimension is system thinking: the understanding of the interrelationship between different components.

According to Marsick (2013) Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1997, 2003) creating a learning organization there are essential to embody key dimensions. Since, Yang et al. (2004) proposed Watkins and Marsick's learning organization model identified seven dimensions of learning organization and its definitions: i) Continuous learning (CL), represents an organization's efforts to create continuous learning opportunities for all of its members; ii) Inquiry and dialogue (ID), follows organization's efforts in creating a culture of questioning, feedback, and experimentation; iii) Team learning (TL), reflects that the spirit of collaboration and the collaborative skills that under grid the effective use of teams; iv) Empowerment a collective vision (EC), signifies an organization's process of creating and sharing a collective vision and gets feedback from its members about the gap between current status and new vision; v) Embedded system (ES), indicates the efforts to establish systems to capture and share learning; vi) System connection (SC), reflects about global thinking and actions to connect the organization to its internal and external environment; and vii) Strategic leadership (SL), shows that the extent to which leaders think strategically about to use learning to create change and move the organization towards new direction. Where it can be understood that the

dimension of the learning organization questionnaire (DLOQ) is as a transformation of dimension of learning organization. In addition organization dimensions added in turn of key results or performances are financial performance (FP) and knowledge performance (KP). Furthermore, Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996) comprise three levels: individual level, team level, and organizational level of organizational learning. Beside these three levels in the organizational model further to be considered it belongs to two main organizational constituents' interactive components people level and structural level. Hence, people level, who makeup and organization, and another, structural level model of a learning organization.

Yang et al. (2004) hypothesized that at first, the organization needs to work with people at the individual and group or team levels. Then in the second, the structural level consists of the organizational level. Hence, people need to be empowered to take learning initiatives, individually at first and then join collectively together in organizational change in increasingly larger units. The structural level learning actively serves as a refining function by fostering and incorporating individual and group learning into the organization's mission or ultimate performance outcomes (Yang et al., 2004).

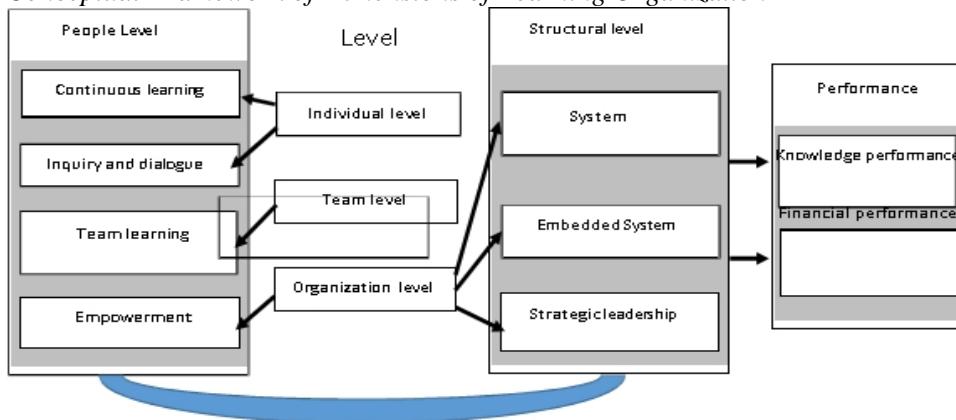
Nevertheless, Goula et al. (2020) have suggested that the eleven key features of an organization that learns: a learning approach to strategy, participation policy-making, continuous information, formative accounting and control, internal exchange, reward flexibility, enabling structures, boundary workers as environmental scanners, inter-company learning, learning climate, and self-development for all. Likewise, Serrat O. (2009) states that learning organizations have six dimensions learning management system, adaptive and generating learning, work style matrices, idealism and reality, strategic learning, and human nature and organizational context.

Conceptual Framework

On the basis of aforementioned theoretical framework we can be structure a conceptual framework as below:

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of Dimensions of Learning Organization



Research Hypotheses

We may adopt an alternative hypothesis based on the above studies as follows:

H1: The dimension of learning organization varies with the nature of the organization.

H2: Dimension of learning organization affects the organization's performance.

H3: Dimension of learning organization confines organization's level.

Research Methodology and Research Design

This study adopted a systematic literature review examining the research method. It is resumed that several (19) articles are collected from Google Scholar, Sci-Hub, and Proquest Severe as per considering different sectors and areas i.e. business enterprises, manufacturing, banks, hospitals, and education. Likewise, different countries like: Korea, China, Brazil, Greece, Malaysia, and Netherlands and soon be selected. The articles are systematically scrutinized and analyzed on a theoretical review basis. The five articles selected by representing divergent sectors (i.e. Profitable and non-profitable or private and public/government areas' business, services, manufacturing, construction, hospital, IT company, and so on.) and different countries (i.e. Malaysia, Colombia, Netherlands, USA, China, Korea, Brazil, Egypt, and Greece). Hence, all the selected five research findings have been presented in the meta-analysis table and explicitly cumulatively analyzed the effectiveness of DLO.

Rationale Research

21st century many more organizations are facing turbulence challenges. They should cope with challenging environments and must synchronize their strategy with challenging environments to achieve success by identifying crucial dimensions of LO and applying customized strategies. Thus, they have a compulsion to enhance their competitive power to get remedies from their rivals by building of competitive power. Learning organization is a continuous improvement, innovation, creation, and employee engagement. This study will be helpful for enhancing the performance of the overall organization by providing resilience and insight into the dimensions underlying in organization.

This research is primarily focused on the dimension of LO. Exploring of the dimension of LO will be valuable for the HRM, OD, and organizations whereas profit or no-profit basis organizations, scholars, and policymakers, who are exploring DLO.

Discussion and Results

In the field of organizational studies has been an increasing increment of attention to learning organization concepts. For the proper application of the theoretical perspective of learning organization need to know the dimensionality of the concept and its relationships with other organization variables (Yang et al., 2004). Hence, after Senge (1990) theorized the concept of LO and provoked five dimensions of LO as the fifth dimension, Watkins and Marsick (1993) 1993. But, Watkins and Marsick (1993) developed and confined the dimensions of learning organization (Songet et al. 2009) that a total of nine dimensions are included with seven characteristics and two key performances (Sayed et al., 2019) for the

purposes of the dimension of learning organization questionnaire (DLOQ). DLO is revealed in Table 1.

Table 1

Definitions of Constructs the Dimensions of the Learning Organization

Dimension	Definition
Continuous learning (CL)	Learning is designed for people as can learn on the job into work; provides the opportunities for ongoing education and improvement.
Inquiry and dialogue (ID)	The culture develop into support feedback and experimentation, people get productive reasoning skills to xpress their views, capacity to inquiry, dialogue and existing into the views other.
Team Learning (TL)	ork is designed to access different modes of thinking to se groups work is designed, expected of groups to learn nd work together the culture and reward is valued to collaboration
Embedded systems (ES)	Maintained systems, all technology systems, high or low to share learning are created and integrated with other work
Empowerment a collective vision (EC)	People involved in setting, owning and implementing a joint vision to distribute the responsibility to close decision making.
System connection (SC)	To see the effect of people work on the entire enterprise, they are helped, to adjust work practice people may scan nvironment and use information linked the organization with its communities.
Strategic leadership (SL)	Leaders model, champion, and support learning; for business results leadership uses learning strategically
Key result (Performance)	
Financial Performance (FP)	States the financial health and available resources for organization growth.
Knowledge performance (KP)	Improvement of products and services through learning and knowledge capacity.

Source: Marsick & Watkins (2003)

Acceptable reliability estimates were obtained for the seven proposed dimensions (Yang et al., 2004). Consequently, many researchers have done empirical studies on it. Severely selected 5 articles demonstrated in the meta-analyses table are here under Table 2.

Table 2
Meta-analysis of dimensions of learning organization

Year	Author	Title	Methodology	Sample	Country	Findings
2003	Marsick, Victoria J. & Watkins, Karen, E.	Demonstrating the Value of an Organization's Learning Culture: The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire	Literature & organizational case study	More than 200 company	Malaysia, Colombia, Netherland, United States	Across the national boundaries reliable, and has process as organizational
2004	Yang, B., Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J.	The construct of the learning organization: Dimensions, measurement, and validation	Best model fit	Multiple organization : Service-49%, Manufacturing-42%, and Public/Government 9% Sample : 836 subjects (nonrandom) Mixed method 6 firms complexity and large scale	USA	Acceptable, reliability estimates were obtained for the seven proposed dimension.
2004	Zhang, De, Zhang, Zhen, & Yang, Baiyin	Learning organization in mainland China: empirical research on its application to Chinese state-owned enterprises	Mix method	6 firms complexity and large scale	China	Reliability and acceptable estimates in terms of internal constitutes .But, in Chinese context few items have been identified less adequate
2009	Song, JiH., Joo,B.-K. (Brian),& Chermack, Thomas J.	The Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) :A validation study in a Korean context	Rigorous translation procedures including forward and backward process in different culture	Diverse enterprises : Tele-communication, IT solution, construction, and others	Korea	Translated version reliable, valid and reliable measures of perceptions of LO culture in Korean organization. Learn about the between learning culture and dependent variables(Learning, performance, satisfaction, change, creation, productivity and effectiveness)

2015	Tortorella,G. Luz, Marodin, G. Almeida, Miorando,R., & Seidel, A.	The impact of contextual variables on learning organization in firms that are implementing lean: A study in Southern Brazil	Descriptive methods. Lean manufacturing	13 companies	Brazil	Contextual variables are same which deemed as influential for implementation different relationship in organizational learning capability. (Where 6 dimensions are valid out of 7)
2019	Sayed,S.S.S. & Edgar, D.	The Role of Leadership Competencies in Supporting the AI Nahda University for Becoming a Learning Organization: A New Qualitative Framework of the DLOQ	Descriptive analysis	(Six faculties: Pharmacy, oral and dental, engineers sector, computer science area, mass- communication ,marketing and business adm..)	Egypt	DLO proposed by Marsick, V. J., & Watkins, K. E.(2003) did not lead to properly overall LO.
2020	Goula, A., Stamouli, Maria-A., Latsou, D., Gkioka,V.,& Sarris, M.	Validation of Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) in Health Care Setting in Greece.	Cross sectional study	(6 Public/ general hospital)	Greece	Valuable and reliable

Source: Compiled by author

As shown in Table 2 Watkins and Marsick (2003) did research with more than 200 companies from Malaysia, Colombia, The Netherlands, and the United States and found out the dimensions of the learning organization questionnaire are reliable and have process durable across national boundaries. For the supporting purposes of 7cs, additional research was done by Yang et al. (2004) taking multiple organizations and they concluded that acceptable and reliable estimates were obtained for the seven proposed dimensions. Zhang et al. (2004) also conducted research in China taking state-owned enterprises selecting Six Chinese companies and large size firms and finding that apart from a few identified items have been less adequate acceptable and reliable estimated in terms of internal constitutes. Nevertheless, in the Korean context, Song, et al (2009) have been researched taking 11 diverse enterprises and concluded that translated versions are reliable, valid, and reliable measures of perceptions of LO culture in Korean organizations. He reduced the items of dimensions up to 21 from 43 which was developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993).

In Brazil, Tortorella et al. (2015) conducted research on lean manufacturing faculties taking 13 different companies and decided that the same contextual variables which are deemed as influential for implementation (LM) different relationship organizational learning capability, but only 6 dimensions valid out of 7. However, in the education sector Sayed, & Edgar (2019) studied in Egypt taking six faculties, and came to the conclusion seven dimensions did not lead properly proposed by Marsck & Watkins (2003). Finally, Goula, A. et al. (2020) findings are reliable and valuable which studies conducted on six public or government hospitals in Greece. Even DLOQ represents the DLO.

Findings, Conclusion and Implication

LO would be highly valued metamorphosis for the contemporary management phenomenon in the globalization arena (Yang et al., 2004). Dimension of learning organization theorized on the bases of learning organization perspective. In the begging, in 1990 Peter Senge developed it as 5 action imperative dimensions, Watkins & Marsick (1993) further sculptured and improved it into 7 dimensions. Nevertheless, Yang et al. (2004) further improved for generalized it by adding 2 key performance as dimensions. In this context, so many researcher are being done still continuously in the management field over the world by scholars.

Although, researchers' findings explicated that there are no similar results in different organizational fields and countries 7 dimensions and 2 outputs represent all organizations' claims developed by Yang, Watkins & Marsick (2004). So in China, Zhang et al. (2004) suggested that the identified few items are less adequate and must be modified to the different cultural contexts. Likewise, in Korea, Song et al. (2009) reduced items 21 by 43 for adjustment and synchronized with Korean culture (Victoria, 2013). According to Tortorella et al. (2015), there are varieties in relationship with organization all earning capabilities whereas only 6 dimensions are valid among 7 in Brazil. In Egypt, the education sector did not completely lead the 7 dimensions of LO (proposed by Watkins & Marsick, 2003) researched by Sayed et al. (2019).

Finally, it is concluded that 7 DLO is valuable and reliable in Greece's public or government hospitals researched by Goula et al.(2020). Though, different researchers propounded and proposed various types of dimensions of LO there can be taken seven DLOs more acceptable, reliable, and validated developed by Watkins and Masick (2004) amongst all DLO than prescribed others.

In conclusion, this study has shown that the least difference results in DLO conceptualized by Senge (1990) and theorized by Watkins and Marsick (1993). The DLOs have significant differences all demographically because divergent organizations encompass naturally rigorous variables such as organizational culture, and these variables affect proportionately over the organizations' performance. Even, this study assists in organizational learning profit or non-profit, human research development, or organizational development for identifying dimensions of LO to develop professional skills, attitudes, and behavior of employees and build up competency power of the organization. Specific learning dimensions play a prominent role in ensuring HR effectiveness (Atikua, et al., 2022).

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