

Organizational Learning Capabilities (OLC) toward Job Satisfaction: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Organizational learning or organizational learning capability (OLC) is about the ability of one organization to apply the correct and appropriate management practices, its structures as well as the procedures which enhance, facilitate and encourage learning. Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. This paper reviews the literature that leads to developing a conceptual framework of a study on organizational learning capabilities and job satisfaction of employees in an organization. Based on previous models and scholarly literatures, four main independent variables are identified, namely, organizational culture, leadership, dialogue and participative decision-making; while the dependent variable is job satisfaction. The study is significant to employees of an organization for improving the skills of acquiring knowledge and learning capabilities. It will also give feedback to the management of the organization the extent of their awareness on Organizational Learning Capabilities (OLC) toward job satisfaction.

Keywords: Organizational Learning Capabilities (OLC), Job satisfaction, Academic library, Librarians

INTRODUCTION

Organizational learning is more of a need than a choice at the present time. Organizational learning can be understood as the process of social construction of shared beliefs and meanings, in which the social context plays an essential role (Chiva & Alegre, 2005). Organizational learning has been considered by academics and practitioners as essential for organizations mainly due to the fast-changing environment. In general, firms that are able to learn stand a better chance of sensing, acting, and adapting upon a dynamic environment (Jimenez-Jimenez & Cegarra-Navarro, 2007; Lin, Peng & Kao 2008; Prieto & Revilla, 2006; Zollo & Winter, 2002). Organizational learning has become a main concept that covers variation of topics in the organizations study of such library (Kassim & Shoid, 2013; Rowley, 2000). Moreover, the emerging of learning and knowledge in libraries will create and describe the concept of knowledge management and organizational learning capabilities (OLC). Organizational learning capability (OLC) refers to the organizational and managerial characteristics that facilitate the organizational learning process (Dibella, Nevis & Gould 1996; Goh & Richards, 1997). Organizational learning or organizational learning capability is about the ability of one organization in order to apply the accurate and appropriate management practices, its structures as well as the procedures which enhance, facilitate and encourage learning (Goh, 2003).

It is commonly said that a happy worker is an effective worker and a happy worker should be satisfied with his job (Moghimi, 2006). Management specialists believe that the increase in

job satisfaction leads to human resources development, and that satisfaction is directly related to productivity, so that higher satisfaction will bring about higher productivity and will consequently result in the elevation of the organization. In contrast, with the job satisfaction's lowering, not only administrative delinquencies will increase, but also much harm will be done to the organization (Amiri, Khosravi & Mokhtari, 2010). The conceptual domain of job satisfaction is broad, because it includes all characteristics of the job itself and the work environment, which employees find rewarding, fulfilling, and satisfying, or frustrating or unsatisfying (Güleryüz, Guney, Aydin & Asan 2008). There are many factors that affect job satisfaction and these factors make workers happy with their jobs and varies from one worker to another and from day to day (Lo & Ramayah, 2011). One of these factors is organizational learning capability. The concept of organizational learning capability emphasizes the importance of the facilitating factors for organizational learning (Chiva & Alegre, 2008).

This paper is concerned with the organizational learning capabilities toward job satisfaction among librarians. There are four OLC's dimensions in this paper which cover variables on organizational learning culture, leadership, dialogue and participative decision-making and entail with job satisfaction. The purpose of this paper is to review the Organizational Learning Capabilities' (OLC) dimensions namely organizational culture, leadership, dialogue and participative decision-making toward job satisfaction among employees in an organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Learning Capabilities

Organizational learning capability is about the ability of one organization to apply the accurate and appropriate management practices, its structures, as well as the procedures which enhance, facilitate and encourage learning (Shoid, Kassim & Salleh, 2011). According to Dibella et al. (1996) and Goh and Richards (1997), organizational learning capability is the organizational and managerial elements that facilitate the organizational learning process or allowing the organization to learn. Goh (2003) added that the growth of this practice would result stronger learning capability throughout the organization. The concept of organizational learning capability gives importance of the facilitating factors for organizational learning or the organizational propensity to learn (Chiva & Alegre, 2008; Chiva et al., 2007).

On the other hand, Sayyed, Somaye and Sayyed (2010) stated that OLC are the organizational and managerial factors which contribute to the enhancement of organizational learning process in organization. Moreover, according to Hayes (2002) organizational learning capabilities are viewed as vital component for the effectiveness and successfulness of an organization and it is related to the whole organization from the top management to every level of the organization. Hence, organizational learning is a medium to enhance organization's productivity and performance. Furthermore, organizational learning capabilities are expected to improve and enhance the organizational performance (Marshall, Smith & Buxton, 2009).

An organizational learning capability is the learning process for each of the organization who practices it (Fang et al., 2011). Therefore, any changes resulted from the learning process may drive to the recovery, or maintenance of organizational function (Alegre & Chiva, 2008). Organizational learning capabilities has become as important element to enhance the growth and innovation of one organization. Besides, a collection of resources of tangible and intangible skills are necessary to use competitive advantages. Organizational learning capabilities are also known as a formation of capacity and combination of ideas in an

efficient way in contact with an assortment of organizational borders and through special managerial methods and innovations (Rashid et al., 2010).

On conducting further research (see Figure 1), Jerez-Gomez et al. (2005) have identified four Organizational learning capability dimensions/constructs which are: (1) Management commitment: management support and commitment to shared vision, organizational learning and developing culture for knowledge acquisition, creation and transfer; involved and facilitative leadership, (2) Systems perspective: building a shared vision; system thinking - viewing the organization as a whole system, (3) Openness and experimentation: a climate of openness for new ideas allowing individual knowledge to be constantly renewed, widened and improved; support experimentation in searching for innovative flexible solutions for problems and (4) Knowledge transfer and integration: team work and learning, mechanism for knowledge spreading at an individual level and integrated into the organization.

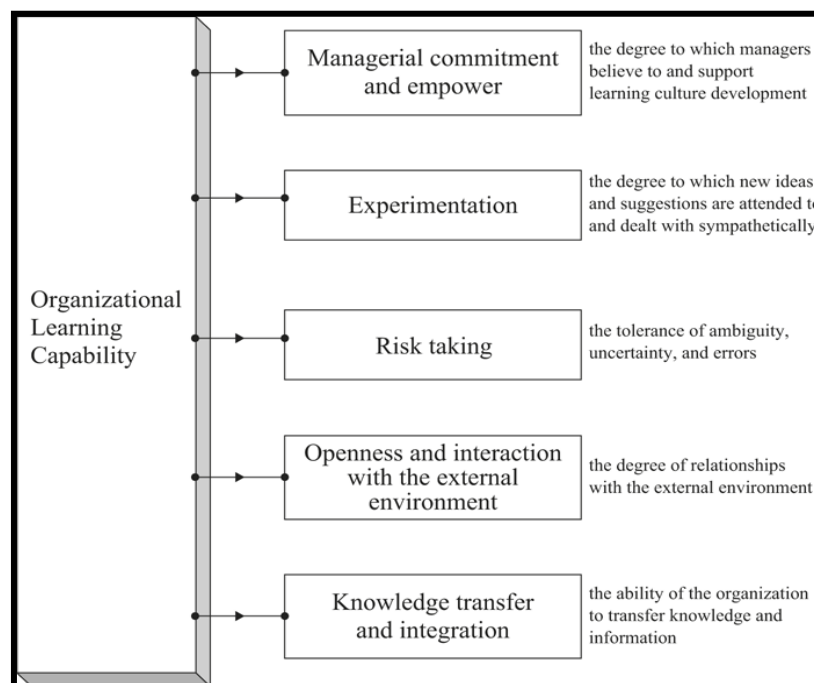


Figure 1. The Conceptual Model of Organizational Learning Capability (OLC) Dimensions by Jerez-Gomez et al, 2005

Also, Chiva et al. (2007) in their research found that five facilitating factors appear to explain organizational learning capability: experimentation, risk taking, interaction with the external environment, dialogue and participative decision-making (see Figure2).

According to Shoid, Kassim and Salleh (2011) there are eight dimensions of organizational learning capabilities identified as to determine the knowledge performance among librarians in academic libraries which was adopted from the previous literature review. Each of the elements of the organizational learning capabilities has been cited by previous researchers (Goh & Richards, 1997, 2003; Neefe, 2001; Hishamuddin et al, 2010). These dimensions are (1) System thinking (2) Organizational culture (3) Leadership (4) Information Communication Technology (ICT) (5) Transfer of knowledge (6) Teamwork cooperation (7) Shared vision and mission (8) Employee's skills and competencies (see Figure 3).

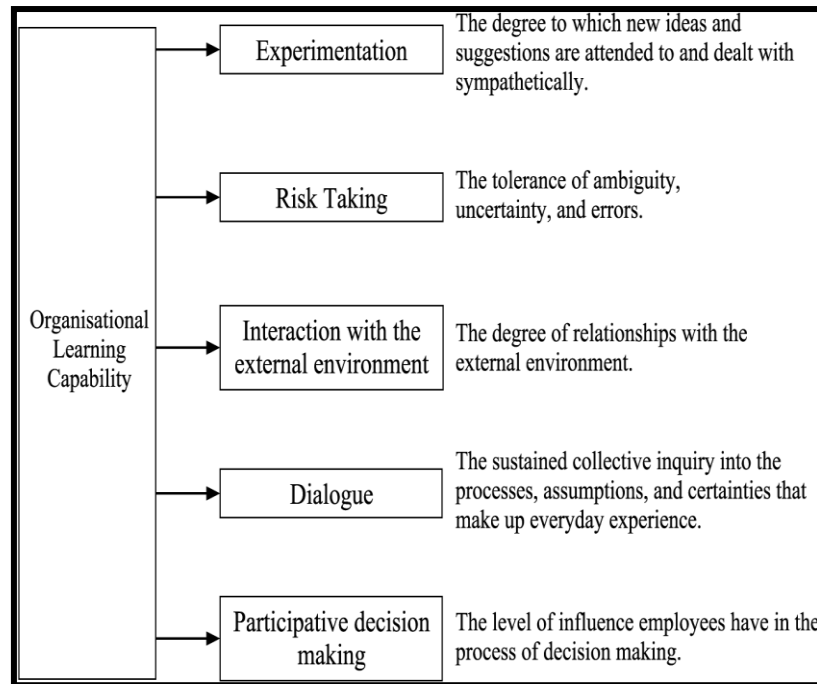


Figure 2. The Conceptual Model of Organizational Learning Capability (OLC) by Chiva et al, 2007

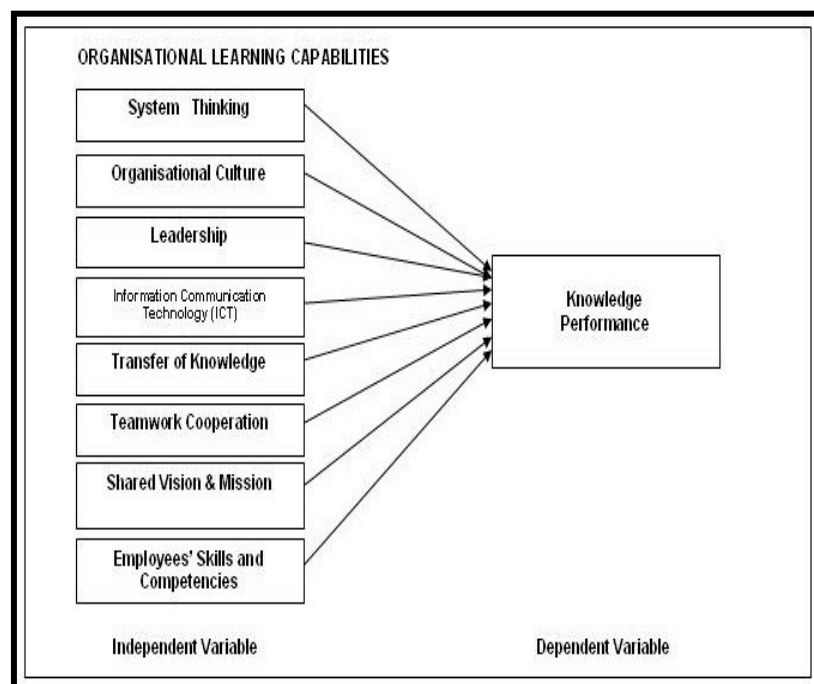


Figure 3. Organizational Learning Capabilities (OLC) Research Model by Shoid, Kassim and Salleh, 2011

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to a set of shared values that induces the organizational community to understand the functionality of the organization itself. At the same time, it also helps in guiding the way of thinking as well as the behavior of members. There are four types of cultures listed by McKenna (2000); power culture, role culture, support culture and achievement culture. The cultures are totally different from one country to the other. A set of

organization's vision should acknowledge the organizational structures and communication system as it helps in facilitating decision making process among members of staff through mutual dependent learning (Howard & Sommerville, 2008). Based on this perspective, culture in organization provides elements of appreciation and growth of positive action within organizational system (Checkland, 1994; Jenlink & Banathy, 2005). On the other hand, positive organizational culture may differ from policy or otherwise lack of general feeling of an organization. Although, employees come and go and leaderships change, organization's memories preserve behaviors, values and mental maps over time. The organization builds a culture and serves as a repository for each lesson learned (Gephart & Marsick, 1996).

There are few researchers who defined and analyzed organizational culture. Schein (1985) stated that organizational culture can be seen as a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that are shared by the organizational members. Furthermore, organizational culture can also be seen as a way of thinking and describing the internal world of an organization. This internal world can be differentiated from another organization by the organization's personality (Sims, 2000). Sims (2000) stated that several researchers defined that the culture of an organization socializes the people. According to Hofstede (1998) organizational culture needs to be in the minds of all the members of the organization. A common similarity of the aforementioned definitions of organizational culture is that organizational culture can be seen as a set of underlying values and can influence the behavior of all the members of an organization and will socialize employees.

Leadership

Leadership is a universal human phenomenon, as well as a rather sophisticated concept (Bass, 1997). The term leadership has been defined and conceptualized in numerous ways and in accordance with different theories of leadership. Bass (1997) pointed out that nearly every theorist has his or her own definition of leadership. From the abundance of available definitions, several common features central to the leadership phenomenon can be identified. The most consistent description noted is that leadership involves a process of influence between the leader and the followers to accomplish group, organizational, or social goals. As stated by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992), leadership is defined broadly as a process that includes influencing task objectives and strategies, influencing commitment and compliance in task behavior to achieve these objectives, influencing group maintenance and identification, and influencing the culture of an organization.

Shaw and Perkins (1991) stressed that leaders have the vital role of promoting effective learning capabilities inside the organization. Hence, the managers need to develop strategic action and specific involvement to ensure that learning takes place. They give examples by introducing mechanism that will encourage and make possible for the transfer of knowledge between teams and developing shared vision among employees. In addition, committed leadership is vital in fostering learning in organizations. Therefore, high conviction is needed as to approach the employees while mistakes are openly accepted as it is part of a learning process (Theriou, Theriou & Chatzoglou, 2006). Slocum et al (1994) stated that leaders should be able to encourage innovation and initiatives in each individual through development of competencies centred on learning and open communications that support the minimal costs of internal change and creation of teamwork. The presence of leaderships promotes the close linkages to learning, mutual trusts with each other, risk taking and sharing organization's vision and mission (Levitt & March, 1988).

Leadership is viewed as an important predictor and plays a central role. Leadership is a management function, which is mostly directed towards people and social interaction, as well

as the process of influencing people so that they will achieve the goals of the organization (Skansi, 2000). Numerous studies carried out in several countries showed that there is a positive correlation between leadership and the job satisfaction of health care providers (Seo et al., 2004; Vance & Larson, 2002; Chiok, 2001).

Dialogue

Dialogue is defined as a sustained collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions, and certainties that make up everyday experience (Isaacs, 1993). Some authors (Isaacs, 1993; Schein, 1993; Dixon, 1997) understand dialogue to be vitally important to organizational learning. Although dialogue is often seen as the process by which individual and organizational learning are linked, Oswick et al. (2000) showed that dialogue is what generates both individual and organizational learning, thus creating meaning and comprehension. Schein (1993) considered dialogue as a basic process for building common understanding in that it allows one to see the hidden meanings of words, first by revealing these hidden meanings in our own communication.

Based on Ballantyne (2004) dialogue has been discussed as an interactive process of learning together. The process between business counterparts is often spontaneous and unruly yet bounded by a serious intent to reach mutual understanding. The understanding on relationship of specific knowledge is constantly updated and fed back into dialogue in iterative cycles of learning. According to Bokeno (2007) dialogue requires open, honest, mutual interaction; not clearer messages, but authentic collaboration, not more communication, but different communication, trust, genuine self-reflection, exposure of dear and tacit ways of thinking, and willingness to grow through risk. Thus, it is easy to see that the premise for dialogue enthusiastically reaches far beyond the industry standard for “effective” internal communication. Based on Bokeno’s (2007) case study, consequently, dialogue endeavors tend to be useful in any of three broad ways:

- For a greater understanding of each other, to promote tolerance or minimize conflict.
- For more creative and innovative decision-making and problem solving.
- For a mutual transformation or change on the part of the participants.

Participative decision-making

Participative decision-making refers to the level of influence employees have in the decision-making process (Cotton et al., 1988). Participative decision-making is a human resource management practice that signals to employees that they are valued by their employer. Organizations implement participative decision-making to benefit from the motivational effects of increased employee involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Scott-Ladd & Chan, 2004). Scott-Ladd and Chan (2004) provided evidence to suggest that participative decision-making gives better access to information and improves the quality and ownership of decision outcomes. Parnell and Crandall (2000) mentioned that divulging information is a requirement for participative decision-making. Subordinates are assumed to be informed in order to participate efficiently.

Participative decision-making provides employees’ direct or indirect voice in decisions and a chance to influence others in different levels of the organization (Elele & Fields, 2010). Bapuji and Crossan (2004) and Scott-Ladd and Chan (2004) considered participative decision-making as one of the aspects that can facilitate learning. Participative decision-making boosts employee morale because workers who are accorded recognition through

participation perceive that management views them as intelligent, competent, and valued partners. This perception of being recognized and valued leads to employee satisfaction and subsequently greater productivity. Daniels and Bailey (1999) concluded that participative decision-making increases the level of job satisfaction. However, according to Westhuizen, Pacheco and Webber (2012) there was little evidence of contemporary literature which explicitly investigates the direct link between participative decision-making and job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is normally defined as an employee's affective reactions to a job based on a comparison of desired outcomes and actual outcomes (Cranny et al., 1992). In sum, job satisfaction is the degree to which people like their jobs (Spector, 1997). There are important reasons why we should be concerned with jobsatisfaction. One of the most important is that jobsatisfaction can lead to employee behaviors that affect organizational functioning and performance (Rowden,2002). Job satisfaction is normally defined as the emotional reaction of an employee to a job based on comparison of ideal results and real results.

Job satisfaction is defined by Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) as feelings that employee hold toward the job, whereas Schultz (1982) defined it as the psychological disposition of people toward their work. Satisfaction can be defined as the degree of an individual's affective orientation toward his or her role in an organization or simply as the degree to which an individual likes his or her role in an organization. Satisfaction is important because it affects a variety of individuals and organization outcomes. Individuals who are satisfied with their roles in organizations are generally physically and mentally healthier and experience a higher quality of life. Satisfaction also affects commitment, motivation, productivity performance, absenteeism, and turnover (Fenwick, 2006). Job satisfaction is very important to performance thus, people who are happy with their work are motivated, put in more effort and are likely to perform better than those who are not.

Job satisfaction is one of the important factors in job accomplishment and results to greater effectiveness, efficiency and productivity as well as personal satisfaction feelings (Mosaddegh-rad, 2004). When employees are not satisfied, they tend to shift and look for satisfaction elsewhere. Researchers in the past suggested that a person's job satisfaction comes from how he or she feels is more important than the fulfillment or unfulfillment of his or her needs (Locke, 1976). When employees are not satisfied, they tend to shift and look for satisfaction elsewhere. Job characteristics such as pay, promotional opportunity, task clarity and significance, and skills utilization, as well as organizational characteristics such as commitment and relationship with supervisors and co-workers have significant effects on job satisfaction (Lo & Ramayah, 2011).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework in Figure 4 shows the independent and dependent variables in this study. Dependent variable can be understood as the output or outcome result. It can also be called the measured variable, the responding variable, the explained variable, and others. Dependent variable in this study is job satisfaction. Independent variables are the individual variables that may have an effect on the dependent variable. They are sometimes called explanatory variables, manipulated variables or controlled variables. Independent variables in this study are organizational learning capabilities dimensions which are organizational culture, leadership, dialogue and participative decision-making. In this study, it will

determine whether organizational learning capabilities dimensions as independent variables may have a relationship with job satisfaction as the dependent variable.

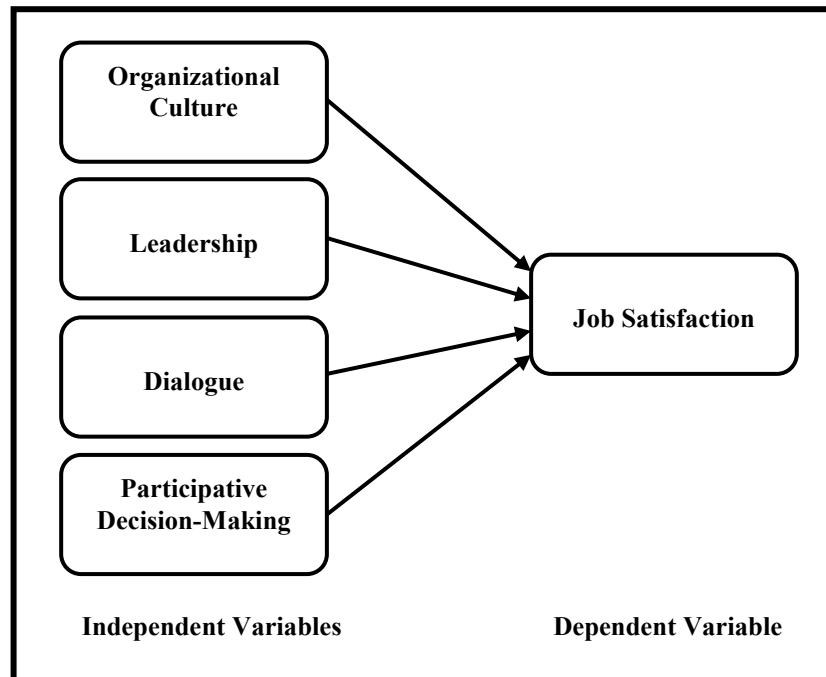


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework Organizational Learning Capabilities (OLC) toward Job Satisfaction

CONCLUSION

It is neither possible nor practical to increase the productivity of an organization without considering the optimal exploiting of the staff's capabilities. Organizational learning capabilities (OLC) have been subjected to the attention of research as it contributes to the survival and sustainability of an organization. Indeed, organizational learning capabilities and their dimensions help in improving employees in organization towards the understanding of other staff's tasks and different working parts. On the other hand, job satisfaction is one of the important factors playing role in job accomplishment and results to greater effectiveness, efficiency and productivity as well as personal satisfaction feelings. When employees are not satisfied, they tend to shift and look for satisfaction elsewhere. Human resources are the most valuable resources in an organization and assuring workers' job satisfaction is one of the most important factors of professional accomplishment and organizational efficiency and productivity. Organizational learning capability might thus be considered as a stimulating working context, where people can develop their competencies and achieve satisfaction. When seeking to improve employee job satisfaction, practitioners should take into account working conditions such as organizational learning capability and its dimensions.

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