Model of Learning Organization in Islamic Azad University

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Abstract: *This study aims to present a model of learning organization in Islamic Azad University. It is practical in terms of purpose and quantitative in terms of implementation. At the first step of the research, after analysing the information, using inductive content analysis, 15 components were identified and were categorized into 5 dimensions of learning levels, systematic thinking, shared vision and aspirations, models and mental models and learning organization evaluation. At the second step of research, the data were analysed at two descriptive levels using statistical indices (such as frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential level (Levine test, t-test), confirmatory factor analysis was done. The results of dimensions analysis indicated that among the dimensions, mental models and learning have the least impact on learning organization in Islamic Azad University and the respondents are not satisfied with the status of its components in the questions. All the components of learning organization in Islamic Azad University are highly capable to be improved.*

Keywords: *learning organization, learning levels, systematic thinking, shared vision, mental models and patterns, evaluation of learning organizations.*

Introduction

In this dynamic business era organization needs to change, learn and implement those changes to get success, without learning the companies and individual repeat the old practices and when there is no change in process or actions the success is either fortuitous or short-lived. The concept of learning organization has gained importance over the past years as a source of competitiveness (Farrukh & Waheed, 2015). Learning organization (LO) is an organization that assists the learning of its individuals and constantly changes itself. Learning Organization enables organizations to remain or achieve competitive advantages in the business environment. A number of researches have done on learning organization. Different researchers have described different models and characteristics of learning organizations on behalf an organization is known as a learning organization such as researcher who defined five principles model of learning organization (Senge, 1990). According to another researcher who described different characteristics of learning organization (Marquardt, 1996). According to researchers who also offered a model of learning organization comprise on eleven characteristics (Pedlar *et al.,* 1991). Moreover, different researchers proposed different models of learning organization such as (Huber, 1991; Kerka, 1995; Phillips, 2003; Slater & Narver, 1995) and lot of other researchers have done work on learning organization in different time of period.

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In today's competitive world, only those organizations that can adapt to the fast changes in the environment have a chance of survival. These changes force the organization to pursue best practices to achieve competitive advantage (Shahayi, 2006). According to Garvin (2008), in a learning organization, employees continually create, acquire, and transfer knowledge, helping their company adapt to the unpredictable faster than rivals. They argue that three building blocks are required for creating a learning organization: a supportive environment, concrete learning processes, and leadership that reinforce learning. Research centres and libraries can benefit from this concept. These organizations play a critical role by collecting, preserving, and transferring knowledge and values, thus facilitating individual and social development. To be dynamic and effective, these organizations need to make radical changes in their structure as well as the attitude of managers and employees. Becoming a learning organization is a crucial step in acquiring the ability to adapt to changes in the global business environment (Akhavan and Jafari, 2006).

"All organizations are experiencing a business environment characterized by rapid change" (Lawler & Worley, 2015, p. 1). The primary driver of change within the business environment is the development of technology and artificial intelligence. Technology has redefined the rules of business, and entire industries have appeared and disappeared as a result of new and enhanced technologies. Disruptive technologies continue to emerge, and major developments in artificial intelligence are right around the corner (Watson, 2012). Change isn't going away anytime soon. Change is a part of the business environment indefinitely (Jensen**,** 2017).

Learning Organization Definition
The learning organization is an organization, where member of the organization constantly put efforts to enhance their capacity and capability to generate desired outcomes and new patterns of thinking are fostered, members go together and constantly learn to see the whole together (Senge, 2004). The concept or learning organization comes under two wide categories, first category treats learning organization as a variable that can be intended to an organization and which has a vital impact on outcome of the organization. In second type of category learning organization is accounted as metaphor to explain an organization (Garavan, 1997). Learning organization is a result of a holistic learning at all level of the organization; it cannot be brought about simply by providing trainings to the members. It is something beyond the training of the individuals, Pedlar also advocates this point as, LO is an organization that assists the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself (Pedlar *et al.,* 1991). Learning organization is all about collectivism and shared values or principles. (Watkins & Marsick, 1993; Jones, 1995).

Learning Organization vs. Organizational Learning
Organization learning refers to activities within the organization where as a LO is the form of organization (Garavan, 1997). Organizational learning represents the processes by which organizations change and can be changed and whereas the term learning organization implies the active promotion and organization of learning activities (Finger & Woolis, 1994). According to another researcher organization learning mainly is a domain of academic (Tsang, 1997). Learning organization is also concerned that how to bring change in the behavior of different members of organization and bring it to more closely with desired state (Tsang, 1997).

Learning Organization & Competitive Advantages
Learning organization learns through its members individually and collectively to craft competitive advantages by efficiently and effectively managing internal and external engendered change (Senge, 2004). Many researchers advocated the relationship between learning organization and competitive advantage. (Senge, 1990; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Redding & Kamm, 1999).

Five Disciplines of the Learning Organization
There are five key disciplines that comprise the heart and soul of a learning organization. These disciplines are not independent of one other. They converge and fuse together to create the requisite infrastructure of a learning organization. The five disciplines include personal mastery, mental models,

shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. These disciplines are based on the premise that people and organizations can change and become more effective through open communication, empowerment, and building a culture of collaboration (Senge, 2006).

1. The first discipline of the learning organization is personal mastery. Organizations don't operate independent of peopleFor an organization to become a true learning organization, the individual members must first learn themselves and achieve personal mastery (Senge, 2006).
2. The second discipline of the learning organization is the use of mental models. Mental models are the deeply held internal images of how the world works. These mental models are unique from person to person. They are based on the life experiences and assumptions that have been reinforced throughout a person's lifetime. These mental models are very hard to change, and they are very limited in scope (Senge, 2006).
3. The third discipline of the learning organization is shared vision. A shared vision is not simply an idea, but an internal force in peoples' hearts that binds them together by a common aspiration. Shared vision creates buy-in and motivates people toward achieving the mission and vision of the organization. Shared vision should serve as a guide in strategic planning and decision making (Marquardt, 2011). Some would argue that shared vision should be the first of the five disciplines of the learning organization. "The first step and probably most important step in becoming a learning organization is building a solid foundation based on a shared vision of learning" (Marquardt, 2011, p. 62). A compelling shared vision can have a positive impact on the long-term financial performance of an organization (Blanchard, 2010).
4. The fourth discipline of the learning organization is team learning. Over the past decade, much emphasis has been placed on teams in organizations. There are many different types of teams in organizations today including project teams, product development teams, cross-functional teams, and many others. Teams in today's organizations are often self-directed teams. Self-directed teams are autonomous and function without a formal leadership structure. They are empowered to make important decisions that affect the organization (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2016).
5. The fifth and final discipline of the learning organization is systems thinking. "It is the discipline that integrates the disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice. It keeps them from being separate gimmicks or the latest organizational change fads" (Senge, 2006, p. 11). Systems thinking considers the complete organization as one living organism as opposed to a series of individual functions. Furthermore, systems thinking is an essential part of a learning organization, as it recognizes the interdependence of all organizational units and activities beyond the mere cause-and-effect attributes that are prevalent in more traditional management thought (Fillion, Koffi, & Ekionea, 2015; Marquardt, 2011). "As our world continues to change rapidly and become more complex, systems thinking will help us manage, adapt, and see the wide range of choices we have before us" (Meadows, 2008, p. 2). Systems thinking provides a comprehensive and holistic approach to the current and future challenges that face organizations. "The systems approach helps us to understand relationships that exist across space, time, and domains" (Cornish, 2005, p. 50).

Factors in becoming a learning organization

Table (1): Factors in becoming a learning organization (Neshat et al. 2017)

Leadership	1. Having a clearly defined vision 2. Incorporating human resource management into the organization's vision 3. Collaboration in formulating the vision 4. Awareness of performance gaps 5. Creating opportunities for participation 6. Having clearly defined objectives
Planning	1. Having measurable plans for achieving the vision 2. Alignment of plans with the vision

	3. Participation of managers and employees in planning 4. Evaluation of plans, processes, and progress 5. Having realistic expectations of employees
Information Dissemination	1. Free flow of information 2. Accessibility of information 3. Informing employees about the organization's plans and activities 4. Sharing research findings and evaluation results 5. Awareness of expectations in the internal and external environment 6. Seeking others' opinions and views on how to improve the situation
Innovation	1. Having a safe environment 2. Valuing novel ideas 3. Creating opportunities 4. Risk-taking 5. Embracing change 6. Having an open environment
Implementation	1. Valuing human resource development and appreciating research and learning 2. Attempting to develop and promote scientific knowledge 3. Fair distribution of resources 4. Pragmatism 5. Applying research findings to practice 6. Fair performance evaluation 7. Flexible work schedule

Models of Learning Organization

There are different models, characteristics of learning organization which measure the sort of organization that either it is a learning organization or not? Learning organization is a learning company which facilitates learning activity for all members. Many researchers have attempted to identify the specifics components and variables which are associated with LO and they developed different models and several studies which attempted to identify the specific components or dimension of learning organization.

Pedler, Burgoyne and Boy dell model of learning organization (1991)

There are eleven characteristics of learning organizations (Pedlar *et al.,* 1991)

1- A Learning approach to strategy
2- Informing
3- Participative policymaking
4- Internal exchange
5- Formative accounting & control
6- Boundary workers as environmental scanners
7- Enabling structure
8- Reward flexibility 9- Inter-company learning;
9- Self-development for everyone as well as,
10- Learning climate

Bryan T. Philips model (2003)

The ideal learning organizations has different characteristics such as strategic thinking and vision, will, leadership, communication, learning and development, innovation and decision making, change management, intellectual capital and knowledge management, measurement and assessment and rewards and recognition They have also defined that Learning is divided into two main characteristics one is climate and second one is culture (Phillips, 2003).

Slater and Narver model (1995)
This model is divided into two portion climate and culture, both are explaining characteristics of the organizational which comprises on LO, where culture describe the values and beliefs which provide norms for behavior in the organization and climate describe that how an organization may work its culture. Overall, they described five elements of LO among those two key components are connected to culture which are entrepreneurship and market orientation and remaining three elements are related to climate which are organic, facilitative leadership and decentralization approach (Slater & Narver, 1995).

Kerka model (1995)
The notion of the learning organization seems to work on supposition that learning is important, continuous, and most effectual when it is shared and learning organization have different characteristics of continuous learning such as use learning to reach goals, link individual performance with organizational performance, foster inquiry and dialogue, embrace creative tension as source of energy and renewal, continuous aware and attract with the environment (Kerka, 1995).

Senge's model of five principles (1990)
There are five principle of learning organization presented in this model and this model is considered among founders of learning organizations models. There are five principles of learning organization such as Mental Models, Personal Mastery, System Thinking, Shared Vision and Team Learning (Senge, 1990) where Mental principle described that people put aside their old ways of thinking, Personal mastery Learn to be open with others, System thinking understand how their company really works, Shared vision is a form or a plan everyone can agree on and Team learning work together to achieve that vision.

Huber's model of learning organization (1991)
Researcher proposed a model of learning organization and criticized the (Senge, 1990) model and addressed the weak area of this model by offering four construct of his model which are, information distribution, information acquisition information interpretation, and organizational memory have strong affect over the information sharing (Huber, 1991).

Marquardt model (1996)
This model described different characteristics of learning organization such as LO continually transforming for better managing the knowledge, empowering people, utilize technology and also expand learning to better adapt and to be succeed in their changing environment. Indeed, different researchers have identified different models of learning organization (Marquardt, 1996).
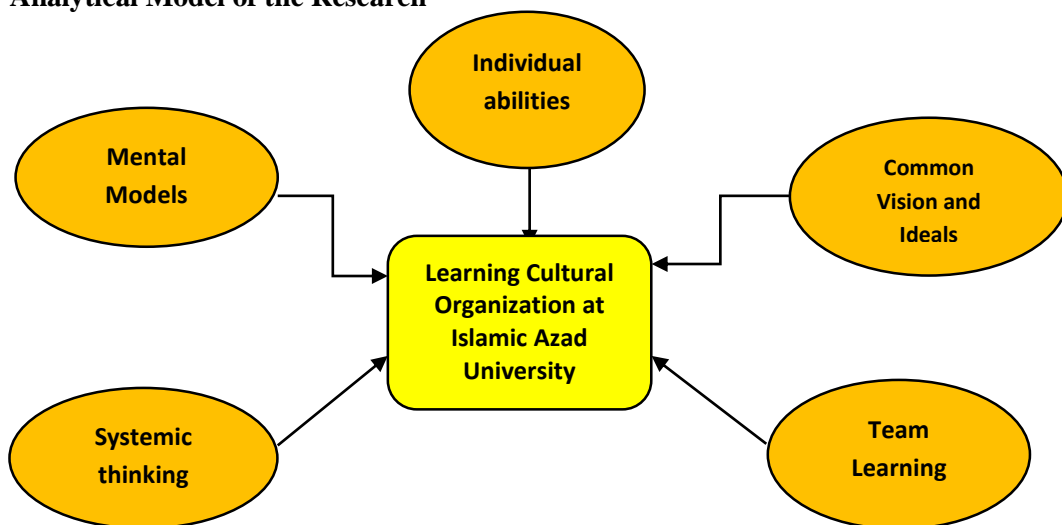
Primary Analytical Model of the Research

Figure (1): Preliminary Analytical Model of Research - Written by Sobhani Nejad et al., 2006: 20-19

Research questions
Main Question
Which is the model of learning organization in Islamic Azad University?

Subsidiary Questions
1- What are the dimensions, components and indicators influencing the model of learning cultural organization at Islamic Azad University?
2- To what extent is the importance of the concept, dimensions, components and indicators of learning cultural organization model at Islamic Azad University from the experts' point of view?
3- What is the current and desired status of the learning cultural organization at Islamic Azad University?
4- What is the quantitative model of the learning cultural organization at Islamic Azad University?

Methodology
This research was applied in terms of purpose and qualitative and quantitative in terms of method of implementation and was conducted in two stages: in the first stage, the research method is qualitative and content analysis with deductive category system. After analyzing the data, using inductive content analysis, out of 679 conceptual codes extracted, 15 components were obtained, which were categorized in 5 dimensions of learning levels (with 3 components), systematic thinking (with 3 components), shared vision and aspirations (with 2 components), mental models (with 2 components) and learning organization assessment (with 5 components).

In the second stage of the study, the sample size was estimated to be 384 according to Cochran's formula. And after data collection, statistical analysis of research data was done at two descriptive levels using statistical indices (such as frequency, percent and mean) and inferential level (Levine test, t-test), confirmatory factor analysis, using SPSS 22 and Lisrel8.54 and Excel.

Findings from Measuring the Current Status of Indicators and Dimensions of Model of Learning Cultural Organization in Islamic Azad University

The Dimension of Learning

Table (2): Examining the status of the dimension of learning

Comparing the average value of 50	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Standard deviation	t size	Significant percentage
Individual learning	13	77	38.12	8.32	-5.422	0.000
Team learning	10	82	31.13	8.68	-8.619	0.000
Organizational learning	11	79	39.8	8.06	-4.732	0.000

According to Table 2, the mean scores obtained are lower than the average. It can be said that respondents are not satisfied with the current status of the components of the learning dimension. Also, all variables are far from desirable status and highly capable of improvement.

The Dimension of Systematic Thinking

Table (3): Examining the status of the dimension of systematic thinking

Comparing the average value of 50	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Standard deviation	t size	Significant percentage
Features of systematic thinking	15	97	65.83	15.83	-7.863	0.000
Systematic thinking management	10	76	31.32	-18.68	-8.559	0.000
Identifying the barriers to systematic thinking	14	82	59.9	9.903	-4.681	0.000

According to Table 3, the mean scores obtained for the variables of features of systematic thinking and identifying the barriers to systematic thinking are higher than the average. It can be said that respondents are satisfied with the current status of the components of the features of systematic thinking and identifying the barriers to systematic thinking. Also, all variables of systematic thinking and identifying the barriers to systematic thinking are close to desirable status comparing to other components.

The mean scores obtained for the variable of systematic thinking management was lower than the average. So, it can be said that respondents are not satisfied with the current status of the components of the systematic thinking management in these questions. Also, the variable of systematic thinking management is far from desirable status and highly capable of improvement.

The Dimension of Shared Vision

Table (4): Examining the status of the dimension of shared vision

Comparing the average value of 50	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Standard deviation	t size	Significant percentage
Shared vision	11	69	33.1	-16.89	-7.764	0.000
Shared ideal feature	10	72	39.77	-10.22	-4.724	0.000
Developing shared image & ideal	10	74	39.846	-10.53	-5.864	0.000

According to Table 4, the mean scores obtained for the variables of shared vision, shared ideal feature and developing shared image and ideal are lower than the average. It can be said that respondents are not satisfied with the current status of the components of shared vision, shared ideal feature and developing shared image and ideal. Also, all variables are far from desirable status and highly capable of improvement.

The Dimension of Mental Models

Table (5): Examining the status of the dimension of mental models

Comparing the average value of 50	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Standard deviation	t size	Significant percentage
Institutional learning in planning	11	77	53.52	3.52	1.746	0.082
Permanent mental attitude	16	83	56.88	6.88	3.683	0.000
Mental model of the organization	17	89	61.08	11.08	6.312	0.000

According to Table 5, the mean scores obtained for variables of permanent mental attitude and mental model of the organization are higher than the average. It can be said that respondents are satisfied with the current status of the components of permanent mental attitude and mental model of the organization. Also, all variables are close to desirable status. The mean scores obtained for the variable of institutional learning in planning are average. Respondents are not satisfied with the current status of the institutional learning component in planning in these questions. Also, the institutional learning variable in planning is far from the desire status and is capable to be improved more than other variables.

The Dimension of Learning Organization Evaluation

Table (6): Examining the status of the dimension of learning organization evaluation

Comparing the average value of 50	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Standard deviation	t size	Significant percentage
Feature of learning organization	10	83	51.13	27.71	0.721	0.471

Structure of learning organization	11	66	38.36	38.36	-7.625	0.000
Organization as intellectual and mental energy	11	72	42.20	42.20	-5.487	0.000

According to Table 6, the mean scores obtained for the variables of structure of learning organization and organization as intellectual and mental energy are lower than the average. It can be said that respondents are not satisfied with the current status of the components of those dimension. Also, all variables are far from desirable status and highly capable of improvement. The mean scores obtained for the variable of learning organization feature are average. So, it can be said that respondents are not satisfied with the current status of the learning organization component in this variable.

Conclusion

Today's global environment is highly competitive, challenging, and unpredictable. Many start-ups and new entrants in today's environment fail. Many organizations that have enjoyed years of success have collapsed. Traditional structures and leadership approaches are ineffective in guiding today's organizations effectively. Organizations that survive and thrive in today's tumultuous environment must be adaptable, flexible, and strategic. They must incorporate high degrees of learning through all levels of the organization. They must become learning organizations. Commitment to organizational learning results in building a learning organization. Learning organizations are characterized by certain core disciplines, exemplary leadership, strong leadership development initiatives, and progressive strategic planning processes (Jensen, 2017). On the other hand, what ensures today's competitive advantage for organizations is qualified employees. Therefore, qualified employees are considered as the most important ability of the organization to gain competitive advantage and also the most intangible asset. Experts believe that qualified employees are the basis for improving the quality of goods and services. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the quality-orientation of staff and its role in the quality of goods and services for organizations, especially competitive organizations. In this regard, the present study presents a model for establishing a learning organization in Islamic Azad University.

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