

The Relationship between Organizational Learning Capabilities (OLC) and Knowledge Performance among Academic Librarians

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Abstract

This paper shows the results of a study that examine the relationships between OLC's dimensions (shared vision and mission, organisational culture, teamwork cooperation, transfer of knowledge, systems thinking, leadership, employees skills and competencies, ICT) and knowledge performance. A set of questionnaire was personally distributed to academic librarians in selected university libraries in Malaysia. A total of 186 (78%) of the respondents returned the questionnaire for further analysis. Result showed that all the dimensions were correlated with the degree of weak to moderate correlation with knowledge performance. The results also indicated that employees' skills and competencies was moderately correlated with knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.637$). The outcome of the study is expected to assist the librarians and academic libraries for improving the skills of acquiring knowledge and learning capabilities toward enhancing the knowledge performance.

Keywords: Organisational Learning Capabilities (OLC), Knowledge Performance, Librarians

Introduction

Marsick and Watkins (1999) mentioned that human was the vital carrier agent of knowledge awareness or knowledge understanding. It has been known that learning organisation that engaged with the knowledge are always growing and developed by not having to destroy the knowledge capital of the organisation. Indeed, organisational learning capabilities are expected to improve and enhance the organisational performance (Shoid et al., 2012). The large number of literatures examined the process, systems and factors that facilitate the performance of the organisation.

Most of the literatures are likely to be rigid, appeared with multiple formats and exist with an ideal set of learning environment (Marshall et al., 2009). Besides, literature on organisational learning should be more sensitive on management effort on learning. Shared learning throughout organisation should not only focus on product delivery and services, but also negotiations and performance management which play important role on organisational effectiveness.

The study objective is to examine the relationships between OLC dimensions (*shared vision and mission, organizational culture, teamwork cooperation, transfer of knowledge, systems*

thinking, leadership, employees' skills and competencies, ICT) and knowledge performance among academic librarians.

Literature Review

Organisational Learning capabilities (OLC) and Knowledge Performance

Organisational learning or organisational learning capability is about the ability of one organisation 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). Besides, Goh (2003) added that the growth of this practice will result stronger learning capability throughout the organisation.

Previous studies by Selden (1998); Selden and Watkins (2001); Abdullah and Kassim (2010; 2008) mentioned that knowledge performance is about the ability of individual, team and organisation to understand what they have learned. Knowledge is sustainable and it has been divided into four subsystems including acquisition, creation, storage and transfer. The management of knowledge is vital as it is the centre or the heart of organisational learning.

According to Lin (1999) it is vital for organisation to consistently foster the development and exchange of knowledge within and among organisation. Higher management should persuade knowledge sharing culture among their employees. This may lead to improve organisational performance. Knowledge sharing or transfer of knowledge is the main element in the organisation in order to generate competitive advantages and improve organisational performance when employees vigorously substitute their knowledge.

Methodology

In this study, quantitative method has been conducted. The selected university libraries in Malaysia were chosen as the study setting. The respective university libraries were Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). They were chosen because the universities have the most number of academic librarians in the university libraries. A set of questionnaires were personally distributed to a total of two hundred and forty (240) librarians of the selected university libraries. From the feedback, one hundred and eighty-six (78%) of the questionnaires were returned and usable for analysis. The questionnaire items were designed on a 1 (strongly disagree) through 7 (strongly agree) Likert scale. For data analysis, descriptive statistics include frequency, percentage and mean and standard deviation while the inferential statistics include Pearson's Coefficient Correlation test.

Results

Profile of Respondents

The summary statistics for the profile of the respondents are presented. From the total of 186 respondents, 70.4% (131) of the respondents are female and 29.6% (55) of the respondents are male. Majority (153 of 82.3%) are middle management staff compared to 33 (29.6%) holding senior management post. Slightly more than half (95 or 51.1%) of the respondents have Bachelor's degree while 91 (48.9%) have Master's degree. Majority (83 or 44.6%) of the respondents belong to the 31 – 40 years of age group, followed by 20 -30 years of age group

(58 or 31.2%), 41 – 50 years of age group (37 or 19.9%) and 51 and above years age group which represents only 8 or 4.3%. Slightly, more than half of the respondents (52.2% or 97) have worked less than 10 years, followed by 37.1% or 69 of those who have worked for 11 – 20 years, 9.1% or 17 who have worked for 21- 30 years and a small number (1.6% or 3) have worked for 30 – 40 years.

Perceptions on Organisational Learning Capabilities (OLC)

The descriptive analysis reports the respondents' perceptions on 8 OLC dimensions. All the scores were then arranged according to the ranking order with the highest mean which was considered as the most preferred response. Result showed the highest mean score was information communication technology (5.65) followed by employees' skills and competencies (5.53), shared vision and mission (5.45), transfer of knowledge (5.39), leadership (5.39), teamwork cooperation (5.29), organisational culture (5.23), and systems thinking (5.13) as depicted in Table 1. Thus, employees' skills and competencies was regarded as the most preferred response among other dimensions.

Table 1

Ranking of the Level of Perception

No.	Dimension	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	5.65	0.618
2	Employees' Skills and Competencies	5.53	0.649
3	Shared Vision and Mission	5.45	0.687
4	Transfer of Knowledge	5.39	0.722
5	Leadership	5.39	0.701
6	Teamwork Cooperation	5.29	0.650
7	Organisational Culture	5.23	0.640
8	Systems Thinking	5.13	0.670

Relationships between Organisational Learning Capabilities (OLC) and Knowledge Performance

Table 2 shows the correlation between the OLC dimensions (shared vision and mission, organisational culture, transfer of knowledge, systems thinking, leadership, employees' skills and competencies, ICT) and knowledge performance. Result showed that all the dimensions were correlated with the degree of weak to moderate correlation. This findings were supported by Calantone et al. (2002) and Liao and Wu (2009). The results indicated that employees' skills and competencies was moderately correlated with knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.637$) and ICT was moderately correlated with knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.527$). The interpretation of this relationship is that on the average, a respondent who has a moderate perception on employees' skills and competencies and ICT is fairly likely to have a moderate perception on knowledge performance as well.

However, the correlation between shared vision and mission and knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.469$), teamwork cooperation and knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.399$), transfer of knowledge and knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.395$), systems thinking and

knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.392$), leadership and knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.350$) as well as organisational culture and knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.329$) were identified as having a weak correlation but also significant ($p < 0.01$). This implied that, a respondent who has a low perception on the OLC dimensions is fairly likely to have a low perception on knowledge performance.

Table 2

Relationship between OLC Dimensions and Knowledge Performance

	SVM	OC	TC	TK	ST	LS	ESC	ICT	KP
Shared Vision and Mission (SVM)	1								
Organisational Culture (OC)	0.627**	1							
Teamwork Cooperation (TC)	0.581**	0.682**	1						
Transfer of Knowledge (TK)	0.631**	0.632**	0.704**	1					
Systems Thinking (ST)	0.627**	0.454**	0.436**	0.445**	1				
Leadership (LS)	0.508**	0.674**	0.703**	0.704**	0.341**	1			
Employees' Skills and Competencies (ESC)	0.595**	0.580**	0.623**	0.714**	0.567**	0.619**	1		
Information Communication Technology (ICT)	0.532**	0.427**	0.424**	0.532**	0.439**	0.392**	0.594**	1	
Knowledge Performance (KP)	0.469**	0.329**	0.399**	0.395**	0.392**	0.350**	0.637**	0.527**	1

Discussion and Conclusion

From the finding, result showed that all the OLC dimensions were correlated with the degree of weak to moderate correlation with knowledge performance. Therefore, these positive results of librarian's perceptions on OLC were indications of the right path towards a better performance in library. This study had its limitation in which it was based on data from selected university libraries in Malaysia. Besides, the results were the outcome from a limited of one research objectives which had been mentioned earlier. It is expected that the outcome of the study will be useful in identifying appropriate programs to improve the skills of acquiring knowledge and enhance the learning capabilities of librarians in library.

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