Organizational Learning Capabilities and Knowledge Performance in Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Library, Malaysia

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Abstract: Organizational learning capabilities (OLC) is defined as the organizational and managerial characteristics of factors that encourage learning process or enabling an organization to learn while knowledge performance can be explained as the ability of individual, group and organization to understand what they have learned. This study aims to determine the perceptions and relationships of organizational learning capabilities among academic librarians on four OLC dimensions namely shared vision and mission, organizational culture, systems thinking and teamwork cooperation. A set of questionnaire was distributed to selected academic librarians in one large public university library. The results found that shared vision and mission shows the most preferred response perceived by the respondents while moderate to strong relationships exist among the OLC dimensions and between knowledge performance. The result is significant to the academic librarians in enhancing their learning capabilities.

Key words: Organizational learning capabilities (OLC) systems thinking · Shared vision and mission · organizational culture · Knowledge performance · academic librarians

INTRODUCTION

The concept of organizational learning capabilities (OLC) has been dealt with extensively in the literature and generates many academic publications both in specialized journals and those of a more general scope. Knowledge and learning as a key resource will contribute to improve knowledge performance if it is properly leveraged and harnessed. Organizational learning works like a catalyst to push forward the organization in a holistic way. Librarians who work in organizations such as academic libraries are specialized in knowledge management process and learning process. They work in three different areas which are user services, administrative and technical services. However, nowadays, their tasks have been challenged by increasingly complex and constant change in the organizational, technological and information environment. Indeed, librarians need to stay update with new technologies and systems, new forms of information, information media and information sources, tasks and roles [1].

Nowadays, libraries have collaborated with the university departments and lecturers to achieve the learning capabilities. Hence, libraries have become the most potential learning atmosphere that function at the university. This is the result from the loads of information sources [2]. However, in the new understanding of learning, libraries have become important component of university's information infrastructure and as a dynamic contributor in the learning process of a particular study program.

Organizational learning capabilities (OLC) have been investigated in non library setting but no studies have been done on OLC and knowledge performance in Malaysian academic library. Thus, this preliminary study aims to address two research objectives based on the four organizational learning capabilities' (OLC) dimensions. The objectives are:

- To identify the perceptions of librarians on organizational learning capabilities' (OLC) dimensions (organizational culture, teamwork cooperation, shared vision and mission, systems thinking) and knowledge performance.

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- To determine the relationships between OLC's dimensions and knowledge performance in UiTM Library.

Organizational Learning Capabilities (OLC): 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 [3]. Besides, Goh [3] added that the growth of this practice will result stronger learning capability throughout the organization. On the other hand, Sayyed *et al*. [4] stated that OLC is the organizational and managerial factors which contribute to the enhancement of organizational learning process in organization. There are four OLC dimensions in this study which covers variables on systems thinking, shared vision and mission, organizational culture and teamwork cooperation and entail with knowledge performance of librarians.

Studies on organizational learning capabilities in previous literatures helped in analyzing the general elements that have been proposed by previous and recent researchers. There were several elements of organizational learning capabilities that have been identified as to determine the knowledge performance among the information professionals (librarians) in the university libraries. Each one of the elements of the organizational learning capabilities has been cited by previous researchers in their study [5-8].

Organizational Culture: Howard and Sommerville [9] stated that a set of organization's vision should acknowledge the organizational structures and communication system as it helps to facilitate decision making process through staffs' mutually dependent learning. Base on this perspective, culture in organization provides elements of appreciation and growth of positive action within organizational system [10]. Organizational culture was recognized as a set of shared value that was responsible in making the organizational community to understand the functionality of the organization itself. At the same time, it is to help in guiding the way of thinking as well as behavior.

Teamwork Cooperation: The powerful working team has brought the employee's skills and knowledge in order to bear on problems as well as to develop innovative ideas for the organization. A case study by Lim *et al*. [11] indicated results of General Linear Modelling (GLM) that teamwork in learning within or out of organization is allied with each other as it supported the commitment to shared vision, learning and open mindedness.

Shared Vision and Mission: According to Senge [5] shared vision is about developing sense of commitment in organization by designing the future images of principle and ambition as a guide to be successful. Determining the clarity of vision and mission in an organization is important in order to prevent the leak of performance consistency [8]. In order to promote sharing knowledge among employees, Lopez *et al*. [12] believed that employer should set up goals of achievements of each projects as well as sharing the vision of the organization.

Systems Thinking: Systems thinking framework builds the understanding among the employees regarding the interrelationships of key components of systems that run in the organization. However, systems thinking exists a shifts of mind set as seeing interrelationship rather than linear cause-effect chains and looking at the process of change fairly than snapshot [13]. Besides, by viewing and understanding organization's original business and determined the problem caused, leaders and other staffs will collaborate with each other in order to find the better solution for the organization [5]. On the other hand, Malek Shah [14] in his study stated that, systems thinking needs to be holistic. It can be proved by constant monitor by the managers on the operational systems in the departments such as quality management systems and infrastructure maintenance.

Knowledge Performance: Previous study by Selden [15], Abdullah and Norliya [16] and Norliya [17] mentioned that knowledge performance is about the ability of individual, team and organization 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 organizational learning. On the other hand, a study by Muhammad Imran *et al*. [18] found that team learning and empowerment are highly correlated to organizational performance. A significant relationship between organizational learning and organizational performance has been indicated by the researchers. Besides that, the performance of the librarians is dependent on the efforts to learn and upgrade the new skills that have been required by the parent institution [19, 20].

Universiti Teknologi MARA Library: University Teknologi MARA (UiTM) main Library is also known as PTAR 1 (Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak). It is one of an academic library which is located in Shah Alam, Malaysia. There are more than fifty qualified librarians who work in different department of the library. PTAR 1 is dedicated to improve the library services through physical resources, knowledge management and current technology to support learning and research through delivery of quality services and conducive ambience for the UiTM communities. The University library remains central to the aspirations of the university from the first set up in 1960. It is not only a repository of research data and learning materials, but it is also central to the students' experience, encouraging learning, dialog, discussion and reflection. Until 2012, the library collections totals more than 600,500 volumes comprising of books, pamphlets, conference papers, bibliographies, calendars, other non-print materials in microform format besides digital collections and databases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this preliminary study, the Universiti Teknologi MARA Main Library in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia was chosen as the study setting. It was chosen because the university is the largest public university in Malaysia and having the most number of academic librarians in the country. Questionnaire was developed after conducting an exhaustive literature review and relevant variables and questionnaires on OLC and knowledge performance were adapted [3-5]. A pre-test was first conducted to ten selected librarians and then followed by validating the instrument by showing it to the experts in the field. As this was a pilot study, questionnaires were personally distributed to a total of fifty middle and senior level librarians of the Universiti Teknologi MARA Main Library in Shah Alam. However, only thirty-six (72%) of the questionnaires were returned and usable for analysis. The questionnaire consists of four dimensions of OLC (shared vision and mission, organizational culture, systems thinking and teamwork cooperation) and knowledge performance. The 43 items questionnaire was designed on a 1 (strongly disagree) through 7 (strongly agree) Likert scale. The data in this study was analyzed using the latest Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics include frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation while the Spearman rho correlation coefficient test was used to determine the relationship between variables.

Table 1: Results of Reliability Test

No.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
1	Systems Thinking	0.912	8
2	Shared Vision and Mission	0.876	7
3	Organizational Culture	0.750	7
4	Teamwork Cooperation	0.842	7
5	Knowledge Performance	0.964	14

Table 2: Results of Level of Perceptions by Rank

No.	Variables	Mean Score	Standard Deviations
1	Shared vision and mission	5.74	0.554
2	Knowledge performance	5.72	0.457
3	Teamwork cooperation	5.59	0.599
4	Organizational culture	5.57	0.561
5	Systems thinking	5.53	0.496

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Reliability Test: Table 1 indicates the results of the reliability tests. It shows that Cronbach's alpha value of systems thinking (0.912), shared vision and mission (0.876), organizational culture (0.750), teamwork cooperation (0.842) and knowledge performance (0.964) exceed 0.7. The value is arranged in ranking order. The value of this coefficient was considered high and acceptable.

Profile of Respondents: More than half (58.3%) of the respondents had Bachelor's degree while 41.7% of the respondents had Master's degree. Female employees had represented the most number in the research and had outnumbered the male in term of academic qualification. In particular, only 38.1% of male librarians had Bachelor's degree and 26.7% of them had Master's degree as compared with 61.9% of female librarians had Bachelor's degree and the other 73.3% had Master's Degree. The librarian who had Bachelor's degree was only 4.8% in the senior management and the remaining 95.2% in the middle management. Those with Master's degree who hold position in the senior management were 20% followed by 80% who hold position in the middle management.

Perceptions of OLC's and Knowledge Performance: The frequency analysis was used to measure the respondents' perceptions and understanding of 4 OLC variables. All the scores were then arranged according to the ranking with the highest mean was considered as the most preferred response. The highest mean scores was 5.74 (shared vision and mission), 5.72 (knowledge performance) followed by 5.59 (teamwork cooperation), 5.57 (organizational culture) and 5.53 (systems thinking) as shown in Table 2.

Table 3: Spearman's rho correlation analysis

	SVM	OC	TC	ST	KP
SVM Correlation Coefficient		.642**	.606**	.817**	.548**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	..001
N	1.000	36	36	36	36
OC Correlation Coefficient	.642**	1.000	.542**	.709**	.268
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.000	.114
N	36	36	36	36	36
TC Correlation Coefficient	.606**	.542**	1.000	.698**	.481*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001		.000	*.003
N	36	36	36	36	36
ST Correlation Coefficient	.817**	.709**	.698**	1.000	.549**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.001
N	36	36	36	36	36
KP Correlation Coefficient	.548**	.268	.481*	.549**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.114	*.003	.001	
N	36	36	36	36	36

**Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Thus, shared vision and mission was regarded as the most preferred response perceived by the targeted respondents.

Relationship Between OLC's Dimensions and Knowledge Performance: A Spearman's rho correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between OLC dimensions and knowledge performance if any between them. The results as illustrated in Table 3 showed that systems thinking was positively and strongly correlated with shared vision and mission ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.817$) followed by organizational culture with systems thinking ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.709$). Meanwhile, correlations between systems thinking with teamwork cooperation ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.698$), organizational culture with shared vision and mission ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.642$), shared vision and mission with teamwork cooperation ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.606$) were positively and moderately correlated. Besides, correlation between knowledge performance with systems thinking ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.549$), shared vision and mission with knowledge performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.548$) and teamwork cooperation with organizational culture ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.542$) were also positively and moderately correlated. Thus, the results revealed significant positive relationships between all variables at the confidence level of 1%.

CONCLUSIONS

The results indicated that the perceptions of the respondents on OLC dimensions and knowledge performance are quite similar and moderately positive.

Shared vision and mission showed the most preferred response as perceived by the respondents with regards that respondents understood their vision and mission of the library. The study also revealed that systems thinking are positively and strongly correlated with shared vision and mission. The existence of strong relationship between systems thinking and shared vision and mission shows that positive perceptions will help to enhance the knowledge performance. The limitation of this study was that, this was a preliminary study and the finding was based on data from one university library. The levels of significance could be improved with wider samples in future study.

Besides, UiTM library can achieve better results on knowledge performance if the organizational learning capabilities are well emphasized among librarians. It is recommended that future study can focus on other OLC dimensions such as employee skills and competencies, leadership, transfer of knowledge and performance measurement. In this study, the results might not be generalized to other academic libraries as well as other types of libraries. On the other hand, learning and knowledge are to attain the effectiveness of organizational capabilities among librarians in the academic libraries. Furthermore, OLC elements can be used as the benchmark to measure knowledge performance and level of learning inside the academic libraries and other organizations. The outcome of this study is expected to improve the learning capabilities and skills among the academic librarians which can assist them in identifying and acquiring knowledge in an academic library.

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