

Measurement and Evaluation of the Realization of Organizational Learning Capability in the Department of Physical Education of Guilan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to measure and evaluate the realization of organizational learning capability in Guilan Physical Education Department and provide solutions through which successful changes can be made by strengthening the dimensions of organizational learning in all the staff. The method of this study was survey and descriptive. Statistical population consisted of all employees of Department of Physical Education of Guilan who were 53 and considered as the sample. Information collection was done using the Neefe Organizational learning 41-item questionnaire (seven-valued) (2001) covering five components including personal mastery, mental models, team learning, shared vision, and system thinking. The validity of questionnaire was confirmed through content validity using the opinions of experts and academics and its reliability was determined 0.872 using Cronbach α method in a pilot study. Descriptive and deductive statistics including Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and t-test at a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ were used. The results showed that the mean of organizational learning of employees of Physical Education Department of Guilan was 3.63, which indicates that the condition is moderate. Also, the mean of personal mastery, mental models, team learning, shared vision, and system thinking were obtained 4.67, 3.54, 3.46, 3.97, and 3.31, respectively. These results show that personal mastery is in a more favorable condition compared to other studied components. The results of deductive statistics showed that all dimensions of organizational learning, except personal mastery, are realized lower than the average, indicating that mental models, team learning, shared vision, and system thinking don't have a desirable status in the staff of Department of Physical Education of Guilan.

KEYWORDS: Organizational learning, Physical Education, Guilan Province

INTRODUCTION

Enormous and astonishing advances in science and technology have highly transformed the organizations and this change is continuing at an increasing pace. In today's competitive world, The organizations have the chance to survive that continuously adapt themselves to the changes of surrounding environment. Environmental changes have forced the organizations to continuously seek the best solutions and procedures to adapt to their environment, and thereby achieve competitive advantage. Emphasis on continuous learning of organization's staff in order to achieve organizational goals with maximum effectiveness is one of the ways to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Subject of organizational learning was firstly raised in 1970. Senge's famous book entitled "The Fifth Commandment" developed and promoted open system thinking and organizational learning. Organizational learning can be defined as a series of organizational measures including knowledge acquisition, information distribution, and information and memory interpretation, which consciously or unconsciously affect the positive organizational change. Marquart (2002) defines organizational learning as a process through which the organization learns and this learning means any changes in organizational models leading to improvement or maintaining the performance of organization. He also defines organizational learning capability as a set of tangible or intangible resources or skills that the organization apply them to achieve new competitive advantages. Experience and studies have shown that when the organizations integrate the organizational learning into the process of becoming organization, they can achieve their goals faster and deal with changes more successfully. Peter Senge (1990) proposed 5 basic principles entitled "Five Commandments" for organizational learning. These principles include personal capabilities, shared vision, mental models, team learning, and system thinking. Tempon *et al* (2002) studied and classified more than 150 scientific articles, in which the term *Organizational learning* was used in order to propose a single definition of organizational learning and concluded three paradigms including demography, social measures, result-orientation have been used to define organizational learning (4,7).

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Gavotte & Richard (2003) declared that five conditions are necessary for the occurrence and spread of organizational learning which include transparency of missions and objectives, ability and commitment of leadership, experiment, knowledge transfer, and teamwork. Movahedi Sobhani (2004) showed that development of learning ability is the engine of any change. Zali & Madhoushi (2006) assessed the organizational learning in a private organization and concluded that the organization in overall lacks learning process in the present status. Yousefi *et al* (2006) conducted a study entitled "Measurement of organizational learning in different units of Consumers and Producers Protection Organization" and concluded that this organization lower than the average in terms of organizational learning (6).

Elahi (2007) stated that the main barriers to creation of learner units in sports institutions of the country. These barriers include non-system thinking in organizations, managerial instability, gradual acceptance of the problems and threats, the lack of a shared vision among members, and not appreciating the creative and innovative individuals, in the order of preference. Safari (2007), in his Master's thesis entitled "Comparison of dimensions of learner units in Physical Education Organization, National Olympic Committee, and Education offices, come to the conclusion that the state of learning in all these three organizations is poor. Growing markets, new technologies, and modern athletic events have changed all dimensions of effective components in sport and overall outlook of sports policies. So, the ability to keep dealing with this issue change facing sport should be ensured. These growing changes have made everyone face with a fact that has created significant challenges and doubles the importance of the presence and application of robust systems of management and decision making in sports management. Given the above-mentioned considerations and sensitivities and considering this that sports organizations are now managed in a very highly competitive atmosphere, the experience of organizational learning can be used for engaging in competition. Department of Physical Education should also realize the sensitivity of situation and take advantage of existing concepts in organizational and managerial fields. Undoubtedly, organizational learning is one of the requirements of this domain that should be taken into account. According to the role of organizational learning in improving the processes and activities in organizations, the objective of the present study is to measure and evaluate the realization of organizational learning capability in the Department of Physical Education of Guilan and provide solutions through them successful changes can be made by strengthening the dimensions of organizational learning in all the staff.

METHODOLOGY

The method of this study was survey and descriptive. Statistical population consisted of all employees of Department of Physical Education of Guilan who were 53 and considered as the sample. Information collection was don using the Neefe Organizational learning 41-item questionnaire (seven-valued) (2001) in five components including personal mastery with 6 questions, mental models with 7 questions, team learning with 10 questions, shared vision with 10 questions, and system thinking with 8 questions. The validity of questionnaire was confirmed through content validity using the opinions of experts and academics and its reliability was determined 0.872 using Cronbach α method in a pilot study. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the natural and normal status of data. According to significant level of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, T-test was used to examine the hypotheses of research at a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. Each of the research hypotheses were tested using deductive statistics and by SPSS 15 software.

RESULTS

According to descriptive statistics, the mean of organizational learning in the staff of Physical Education Department of Guilan Province was obtained 3.63, indicating that status is moderate. Also, the mean of personal mastery, mental models, team learning, shared vision, and system thinking were obtained 4.67, 3.54, 3.46, 3.97, and 3.31, respectively. These results show that personal mastery is in a more favorable condition compared to other studied components. The results of deductive statistics showed that all dimensions of organizational learning, except personal mastery, are realized lower than the average, indicating that mental models, team learning, shared vision, and system thinking don't have a desirable status.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The ability of learning and detection of appropriate changes and their implementation is an important capability that is very key for being preeminent in today's changing world. According to the results of the present study, it can be said that the degree of realization of organizational learning dimensions in the staff of Physical Education Department of Guilan Province is not desirable. In other words, learning status is near the average indicating the weakness of this sport organization in terms of learning. Findings of the present study reveal the fact that although it can be mentioned that Physical Education Department of Guilan Province has started its way towards being a learner organization with a mean of 3.63 of the all dimensions of organizational learning, this organization is not in an acceptable position in terms of mental models, team learning, shared vision, and system thinking and needs more efforts to strengthen these dimensions. This is only achieved

through a change in the attitude of senior managers towards empowerment of the staff. Taslimi & Naderi (2003) believe that effective factors in the chain of reasons of an organization's survival in the face of environmental changes are associated with learning ability of organization and its integration in order to adapt to environmental changes. They also suggested that organizational learning capability is better to be encouraged in a systematic and coherent framework. Comprehensive increase and encouragement of organizational learning capability to adapt to environmental changes means that survival and thriving in the environment is always of concern in organizations (3).

At the end, some solutions for going out of this situation can be proposed. Providing a proper substrate for education, management communications, and continuous measures; establishment of informational-communicative infrastructures between various departments and units; proposing a clear and understandable definition of vision and mission of the organization at all levels; holding workshops in order to develop the shared vision and attitude; providing and developing the learning opportunities through interaction with each other; emphasis on learning in all sectors and organizational processes; and holding continuous on-the-job training courses to empower human power are some of these solutions.

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