

5th World Conference on Educational Sciences - WCES 2013

Organizational learning capacity in cargo industry

Celalettin Serinkan, Mehmet Kiziloglu*, Volkan Akcıt^c Pınar Enli

Pamukkale University, Denizli, Turkey

Abstract

Learning organizations are known as organizations which adopt learning as a team, systems thinking, creating a vision. The capacity of organizational learning is accepted as an important variable being a learning organization. When the Turkish literature on learning organizations was reviewed, it has been noted that there are some research carried out in different areas of interest, except cargo sector. The cargo industry worldwide has played an increasingly important role in world trade and cargo industry being the fastest growing sector in the dynamic market and therefore knowledge and learning are important issues for these foundations. The aim of this research was to evaluate the organizational learning capacity of the Cargo employees. Data were gathered from 102 employees who are working at Cargo companies in Denizli. SPSS was used for the data analysis.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

Keywords: Organizational learning, learning capacity, cargo industry

1. Introduction

We live in a world of disruptive change (Christensen&Overdorf, 2000). In our disruptive world, an organization's capacity to learn, apply and spread new insight has been touted as the fundamental strategic capability (Fiol &Lyles, 1985) and leading source of competitive advantage (de Geus, 1988, 1997; Stata, 1989). Organizational learning is fundamental for improving performance within a rapidly changing and competitive business environment. Some researchers such as; Argyris (1999), Crossan and Hlland (2002), Kululanga et al. (2002), Smyth (2004), Lopez et al. (2005), Senge (1990), Stata (1989), Kim et al. (2009) argue in general that organizational learning is conducive to companies performing well in the competitive environment of today's business world. Organizational learning can be defined as the development of new knowledge that has the potential to influence behavior in an organization (Huber, 1991). The literature on this topic has grown rapidly over the past few years. Various works have dealt with the analysis of this construct from differing viewpoints.

Our objective is to measure of organizational learning capacity. We test its validity and reliability in a sample of 102 employee who are working at Cargo companies in Denizli. We first establish the concept of organizational learning. Then, analyze data which we collected from Cargo employees. Finally, we set out the findings and conclusions of the study.

* Corresponding Author: Mehmet KIZILOGLU Tel.: +90-535-4788552
mkiziloglu@pau.edu.tr

2. Literature review

2.1. Organizational learning

Organizational learning concept has been first emerged in 1970's and defined as to catch the errors and fix them. In these days, the firms' learning activities were being accepted to be realized via the employees working for them (Daft and Weick, 1984). Argyris has shortly defined organizational learning as detecting the error and fixing process. Organizational learning literature is studied by several researchers (e.g., Argyris and Schön, 1978; Argyris and Schön, 1996; Shrivastava, 1983; Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Daft and Huber, 1987; Levitt and March, 1988; Huber, 1991; Nonaka 1991; Sinkula, 1994; Crossan et al., 1995; Slater and Narver, 1995; Easterby-Smith, 1997; Baldwin et al., 1997; Bell et al., 2002; Bontis et al., 2002). Bontis et al. (2002) note that in order to survive organizations are forced to learn efficiently and effectively in today's tougher competitive environment and by effect of the knowledge era. Baldwin et al. (1997) noted that what seems to distinguish surviving and adapting organizations from the rest is their ability to learn. Also Nonaka (1991) argued that competitive advantage, innovation and effectiveness are the primary products of nurturing a culture of learning within a company.

Organizational learning is a dynamic process. Not only does learning occur over time and across levels, but it also creates a tension between assimilating new learning (feed forward) and exploiting or using what has already been learned (feedback) (Crossan et al., 1999).

2.2. Organizational learning capacity

The increasingly dynamic environment and the spurt in information technology gave rise to the recognition that knowledge is perhaps the most important resource for developing a sustainable competitive advantage (Grant, 1996a, 1996b). This literature stresses that an organization should focus on enhancing its intellectual capacity and the dissemination of knowledge among its members (Huber, 1991; Kogut and Zander, 1992, Hult et al., 2001).

It is the intangible, organization-specific knowledge that can generate value in a unique, inimitable, nontransferable way. Therefore, an argument can be made that knowledge and the capacity to develop knowledge are the major resources that generate added value. We refer to this capacity as the "organizational learning capacity." The key to obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage is the integration of knowledge of participants (Hult et al., 2001).

3. Method

The instrument used in this study is the organizational learning questionnaire comprised four factors with 17 questions. Hult (2001) designed this questionnaire, with the reliability of 0.87, the results were satisfactory. The factors of this questionnaire include team orientation, system orientation, learning orientation and memory orientation.

The sample group in the present research is employees of an cargo companies in Denizli, which in this research, among them 102 individuals were selected based on simple random sampling as statistical sample members. Finally, 102 questionnaires were distributed and then analyzed in SPSS.

4. Findings

The aim of this study to determine the views of the cargo employees about organizational learning capacity, sharing the resulting data on organizational learning and the creation of awareness of organizational learning in the cargo companies.

The participants of the survey were employees who work in cargo sector. The total number of the participants was 102. The sample consisted of 67 men with 65.7% and 35 women with 34.3%. Considering participants education level; 8.8% have primary school, 58.8% have high school, 23.5% have bachelor degree and 8.8% have

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