

Learning Organisational Practices and Organisational Commitment: Evidence from the IT Sector of Karachi

Muhammad Muzammil Ghayas^a, Dr Ume Sumayya^{b*}, Dr Ume Amen^c,
Abida Shaheen^d, ^aLecturer – Iqra University, ^bAssistant Professor – Iqra
University, ^cAssistant Professor- Dow University of health sciences, ^dAssistant
Professor – Iqra University, *Corresponding author, Email:
^amuzzammilghayas87@gmail.com, ^{b*}sumayya@iqra.edu.pk,
^cUme.amen@duhs.edu.pk, ^dabidashaheen@iqra.edu.pk

This paper aims to explain the relationship between learning organisational practices and dimensions of organisational commitment. Two separate instruments were developed for the purpose of the research. The first instrument consisted of twenty-one items and was used for measuring seven learning organisational practices namely continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning and collaboration, empowerment, embedded systems, systems connection, and strategic leadership. On the other hand, the second instrument consisted of twenty-four items and was used for measuring three dimensions of organisational commitment namely affective, normative and continuance commitment. The data was collected from 270 employees of the IT sector at two different points in time. Three separate Multiple Regression Analyses were used as the statistical technique. Results indicated that six of the seven learning organisational practices included in the study, namely continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, and collaboration, empowerment, embedded systems, and systems connection are significantly related with the affective commitment. On the other hand, six of the seven practices included in the study namely continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, and collaboration, empowerment, embedded systems, and systems connection have a significant relationship with the normative commitment. Last but not least, five of the seven practices included in the study, namely continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, and collaboration, empowerment and systems connection have a significant relationship with the continuance commitment.

Keywords: *Learning Organisations, Continuous Learning and Organisational Commitment.*



1. Introduction

The world has changed with an unprecedented pace and so has the business world. The introduction of globalisation has made it extremely difficult for businesses to survive (Ghayas & Siddiqui, 2012). In the face of technological and organisational innovations related to new forms of organisation of work, contemporary organisations, with a view to ensuring their continuity in the business world, have covered a vast distance from implementing policies to managing strategies to make them more competitive (Voegtlin, 2015). However, in this process, businesses have been able to realise the importance of learning.

Organisational learning, which has not been discussed extensively previously, has become the topic of the business world. Organisational learning is an idea that applies to all organisations. Nevertheless, by and by it relates distinctively to everyone. This is because organisational learning is described as the gathering and organising of information worked after some time in a formal as well as casual way, inside or outside the organisation. The IT sector is one such sector that has witnessed extensive changes in the ways of working. Hence, learning is key in the IT sector.

Many researchers have studied organisational learning (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Dickson, Den-Hertzog and Michelson, 2003). Egan, Yang, and Bartlett (2004) suggested that Continuous Learning Opportunities, Dialogue and Inquiry, Team Learning and Collaboration, Empowerment, Embedded Systems, Systems Connection and Strategic Leadership are the dimensions of organisational learning. On the other hand, researchers have also studied organisational commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). While examining organisational commitment, Allen and Meyer (1990) argued that commitment is a multi-facet construct and is comprised of Affective Commitment (AC), Normative Commitment (NC), and Continuance Commitment (CC). Dirani (2009) studied learning organisational practices; however, there is a scarcity of researches that seeks to test the impact of learning organisational practices on the dimensions of organisational commitment. Hence, there exists a need to study the impact of learning organisational practices on the different dimensions of organisational commitment. In this regard, this paper seeks to explain the relationship between learning organisational practices and the three dimensions of organisational commitment as suggested by Allen and Meyer (1990) in the IT Sector of Karachi.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

This research is based on the theoretical underpinnings of the Two Factor Theory. In 1959, Herzberg distributed his investigation of sentiments of 200 specialists and bookkeepers from more than nine organisations in the United States. These experts were requested to portray

work encounters where they felt either to a great degree terrible or extraordinarily great about their employment and evaluated their sentiments on these encounters. Reactions about positive sentiments are for the most part identified with occupation content (sparks), and reactions about awful emotions are related with employment setting (cleanliness factor). Inspirations came to fruition with variables incorporated with the activity itself, for example, accomplishment, acknowledgment, obligation and headway. Factors of hygiene were identified with sentiments of disappointment inside the representatives and were outward to the activity, for example, relational relations, pay, supervision and friends approach (Herzberg, 1966). Herzberg sorted pay and so on, as the cleanliness factor, while headways and profession openings are a piece of the sparks. Consequently, anything that can be useful in accomplishing the profession related or progression can be considered is as an inspiration and learning is a basic component for the headway in vocation. Along these lines, the practices or learning associations are likewise useful for the workers in connection to professional success. Subsequently this rouses the representatives and they end up submitted towards the associations. Henceforth this exploration proposition depends on the two components theory.

2.2 Learning Organisations

The ability to learn has become instrumental for the very success of any organisation especially in this era of globalisation. This is because of the fact that the environment is changing rapidly and without meeting the demands of changing environment, one cannot maintain the status quo. Hence, the importance of the ability to learn cannot be ignored. Therefore, researchers (Bontis, Crossan & Hulland, 2002; Matusik & Heeley, 2005) have studied learning organisational practices. Berson, Nemanich, Waldman, Galvin and Keller (2006) have also revealed the conditions of organisational learning practices at different layers (team/group, organisational or individual) that provide the opportunities for creating a learning organisational culture. Watkins and Marsick (1992) also suggested three layers' of the concept of learning organisational practices. On the other hand, Egan et al., (2004) argued that learning organisational practices have a significant association with positive work outcomes.

Although, there is scarcity of literature concerning learning organisational practices, there are seven generally acknowledged dimensions of learning organisational practices. These are continuous learning, dialogue inquiry, team learning and collaboration, embedded systems, empowerment, systems connections, and strategic leadership. Watkins and Marsick (1992) defined continuous learning as a learning practice designed for the work so that employees can learn the job. On the other hand, dialogue inquiry is a practice that promotes inquiry, feedback and experimentation. Whereas team learning and collaboration is defined in terms of a practice to develop a set of employees to approach different thinking styles. As far as the embedded systems are concerned, Watkins and Marsick (1992) defined it in terms of high- tech and low-tech systems that contribute to learning, whereas, empowerment talks about the sense of being able to make decisions. System connections are defined when employees are supported to view the results of their job in the company. As far as strategic leadership is concerned, it can be

defined in terms of the ability of a leader to incorporate learning practices within an organisation. In this regard, it should be noted that Vera and Crossan (2004) had previously studied strategic leader and learning organisational practices. Hence one cannot deny the importance of leadership in creating an environment that is conducive for learning.

2.3 Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment can be defined as the individual's relative strength identification with and particular organisational involvement (Porter & Smith, 1970). Chandler (2013) emphasises the importance of building commitment relationships and for the organisation to be in tune with the changes in the environment that surrounds it. From commitment, there derives a series of attitudes and desirable behaviours: high degree of attendance and punctuality, low turnover rates, attitudes change, high individual performance, citizenship behaviour, and others. The diverse results provided by the high degree of commitment strategic relevance in the present day. Allen and Meyer (1990) argued that there are three sorts of commitment; these are the affective, normative and continuance commitment.

2.4 Learning Organisational Practices and Organisational Commitment

Many researchers have studied organisational learning (Dickson, Den-Hertzog & Michelson, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004) whereas others have studied organisational commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). While studying organisational commitment, Allen and Meyer (1990) suggested that commitment is one of three types which are affective, normative and continuance commitment.

Issues of workforce, progresses comprehension of organisational learning rehearses related with organisational commitment, and helps with illuminating how much the components of organisational commitment are a factor to by and large organisational commitment (Robbins and Judge, 2012). Notwithstanding, no examination is led on the subject of the connection between the practices of organisational learning and organisational commitment in the IT area of Karachi. Thus this exploration tries to test the effect of organisational learning rehearses on the organisational commitment in the IT business of Karachi.

2.4.1 Learning Organisational Practices and Affective Commitment

The concept of learning organisational practices focuses on creating a conducive work environment that enables the collaboration at different levels within an organisation. Hence, it is a bit more transformational in nature; therefore, this enhances the social exchange. On the other hand, the concept of affective commitment has been defined by Allen and Meyer (1990) in terms of emotional attachment with the organisation. In this regard, one can argue that a collaborative and conducive work environment can be instrumental in inculcating the emotional attachment towards the organisation. It is because of this particular reason that

Dirani (2009) studied dimensions of learning organisational practices in relation to affective commitment and found a significant correlation between all of the seven dimensions of learning organisations and affective commitment. However, the study remained short of explaining the causal relationship between the dimensions of learning organisational practices and affective commitment. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H1: Dimensions of Learning Organisational Practices have a significant impact on Affective Commitment.

2.4.2 Learning Organisational Practices and Normative Commitment

As has already been discussed, the concept of learning organisational practices is based on creating a conducive and collaborative work and thereby enhances the social exchange relationships. Therefore, one can argue that these dimensions of learning organisational practices may have positive associations with the normative commitment as well. It is because of the fact that normative commitment symbolises perceived responsibility to remain in an organisation (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002) and the presence of a conducive and collaborative work that enhances the social exchange relationships may result in an enhanced level of normative commitment. Furthermore, Dirani (2009) has already argued that learning organisational practices are positively associated with the overall commitment of an employee. Since normative commitment is one of the dimensions of overall commitment, therefore, one can argue that learning organisational practices may also be positively associated with normative commitment if they are positively associated with the overall commitment of an employee. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Dimensions of Learning Organisational Practices have a significant impact on Normative Commitment.

2.4.3 Learning Organisational Practices and Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment talks about the perceived benefits of cost associated with staying with the organisation. Since the IT sector is a dynamic sector and importance of leaning cannot be ignored Pahl-Wostl (2002), therefore, people in the IT sector are always eager to learn new things in order to remain competitive. Hence, it is natural that people in the IT sector will prefer to stay in an organisations that provides learning opportunities. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Dimensions of Learning Organisational Practices have a significant impact on Continuance Commitment.

3. Methodology

Two separate instruments were developed for the purpose of this research. The first instrument consisted of twenty-one items. These twenty-one items were adapted from DLOQ and were used for measuring seven learning organisational practices, namely continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning and collaboration, empowerment, embedded systems, systems connection, and strategic leadership. On the other hand, the second instrument consisted of twenty-four items. The items were adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990) and were used for measuring three dimensions of organisational commitment, namely affective, normative and continuance commitment. The instruments were distributed among 300 employees of the IT sector. Out of these 300 employees, only 273 returned both the instruments. It should be noted that the data was collected at two different points in time. Three separate Multiple Regression Analyses were used as the statistical technique. For the purpose of analysis, the following regression models have been developed:

$$AC = \alpha + \beta_1 CL + \beta_2 DI + \beta_3 TLC + \beta_4 ES + \beta_5 EMP + \beta_6 SC + \beta_7 SL + \varepsilon$$

$$NC = \alpha + \beta_1 CL + \beta_2 DI + \beta_3 TLC + \beta_4 ES + \beta_5 EMP + \beta_6 SC + \beta_7 SL + \varepsilon$$

$$CC = \alpha + \beta_1 CL + \beta_2 DI + \beta_3 TLC + \beta_4 ES + \beta_5 EMP + \beta_6 SC + \beta_7 SL + \varepsilon$$

Where CL is Continuous Learning Opportunities, DI is Dialogue and Inquiry, TLC is Team Learning and Collaboration, EMP is Empowerment, ES is Embedded Systems, SC is Systems Connection, SL is Strategic Leadership, α is constant, β is regression coefficient and ε is the error term.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach alpha test was used to test the internal reliability of the instrument. The results of the test are given below:

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Continuous Learning	03	0.708
Dialogue and Inquiry	03	0.776
Team Learning and Collaboration	03	0.753
Embedded Systems	03	0.812
Empowerment	03	0.759
System Connection	03	0.810
Strategic Leadership	03	0.724
Affective Commitment	08	0.800
Normative Commitment	08	0.780
Continuance Commitment	08	0.809

Table 1 presents the results of the Cronbach alpha test. The Cronbach alpha value for all the variables is greater than 0.7, therefore, there is no issue pertaining to the internal reliability of the instrument.

4.2 Learning Organisational Practices and Affective Commitment

Table 2: Regression Results for Model 1 –Affective Commitment as Dependent Variable

Variables	β Estimate	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	1.251	5.714	.000	
CL	.151	2.571	.011	1.243
DI	.118	2.098	.037	1.240
TLC	.252	4.131	.000	1.726
ES	.211	4.474	.000	1.494
EMP	.216	4.484	.000	1.349
SC	.143	2.201	.025	1.413
SL	.011	1.348	.057	1.541
Adjusted R-Square = 0.391 F-Statistics = 39.168 Sig-value = 0.000				

Table 2 presents the results of regression model 1 which seeks to explain the relationship between learning organisational practices and affective commitment. The Adjusted R-Square value for the model is 0.391 which suggests that 39.1% of the variance in the dependent variables is explained through the independent variables used in the model. Furthermore, the F-Statistic value is 39.168 and its sig-value is less than 0.05, suggesting that the model is statistically fit.

On the other hand, the sig-value of all the studied practices of learning organisations except strategic leadership are less than 0.05, therefore, it is argued that all the studied practices of learning organisations except strategic leadership have significant association with affective commitment.

4.3 Learning Organisational Practices and Normative Commitment

Table 3: Regression Results for Model 2 –Normative Commitment as Dependent Variable

Variables	β Estimate	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	1.241	5.394	.000	
CL	.148	2.586	.010	1.241
DI	.111	2.091	.038	1.239
TLC	.248	4.129	.000	1.719
ES	.217	4.492	.000	1.494
EMP	.144	2.197	.021	1.449
SC	.131	2.801	.025	1.523
SL	.009	1.348	.084	1.638
Adjusted R Square = 0.388 F-Statistics = 37.259 Sig-value = 0.000				

Table 3 presents the results of regression model 2 which seeks to explain the relationship between learning organisational practices and normative commitment. The Adjusted R-Square value for the model is 0.388 which suggests that 38.8% of the variance in the dependent variables are explained through the independent variables used in the model. Furthermore, the F-Statistic value is 37.259 and its sig-value is less than 0.05, suggesting that the model is statistically fit.

On the other hand, the sig-value of all the studied practices of learning organisations except strategic leadership are less than 0.05, therefore, it is argued that all the studied practices of learning organisations except strategic leadership have significant association with normative commitment.

4.4 Learning Organisational Practices and Continuance Commitment

Table 4: Regression Results for Model 3 –Affective Commitment as Dependent Variable

Variables	β Estimate	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	3.274	12.453	.000	
CL	.131	2.012	.045	1.241
DI	.177	2.937	.004	1.239
TLC	.179	2.344	.010	1.719
ES	.049	1.888	.376	1.494
EMP	.178	2.801	.016	1.523
SC	.182	2.894	.013	1.523
SL	.013	1.515	.076	1.638
Adjusted R Square = 0.249 F-Statistics = 23.981 Sig-value = 0.000				

Table 4 presents the results of regression model 3 which seeks to explain the relationship between learning organisational practices and continuance commitment. The Adjusted R-Square value for the model is 0.249 which suggests that 24.9% of the variance in the dependent variables is explained through the independent variables used in the model. Furthermore, the F-Statistic value is 23.981 and its sig-value is less than 0.05, suggesting that the model is statistically fit.

On the other hand, the sig-value of all the studied practices of learning organisations except embedded systems and strategic leadership are less than 0.05, therefore, it is argued that all the studied practices of learning organisations except embedded systems and strategic leadership have significant association with continuance commitment.

5. Discussions

5.1 Discussion

This research supports the presence of a significant relationship between practices of learning organisations, namely continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning and collaboration, empowerment, embedded systems and systems connection and affective commitment. The findings are aligned with the research of Pokharel and Ok Choi (2015) which concluded that affective commitment is highly influenced with the communication of team members and managers with the team. Moreover, the research of Chuang, Jackson and Jiang (2016) suggests that affective commitment is strongest in organisations where the engagement of employees, empowerment and connected systems are strongest. On the other hand, it is

observed that the hypotheses of this research reject the significant relationship of affective commitment with strategic leadership.

On the other hand, the research also supports the hypotheses that continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning and collaboration, empowerment, embedded systems, and systems connection are related to normative commitment. Even though the research of Nazir et al., (2016) finds no significant relationship between continuous learning and empowering employees on normative commitment, it signifies that connective environment and systems are the strong elements that contribute in the anormative commitment of the employees. Moreover, the research of Khan, Naseem and Masood (2016) has highlighted that inquiry and dialogue, strategic leadership collaboration and team learning have a significant relationship with normative commitment of employees towards an organisation.

Furthermore, the research also supports the hypotheses that continuous learning opportunities, dialogue and inquiry, team learning and collaboration, empowerment and systems connection have a significant relationship with the continuance commitment and are related to the continuous commitment. The research of Demirtas and Akdogan (2015) has signified the importance of all these elements in increasing the continuance commitment of employees. On the other hand, the researchers Islam, Ahmad Kassim & Sadiq (2014) have argued that continuance commitment is associated with the culture of an organisation. Hence it implies that the positive and supportive atmosphere of an organisation is likely to contribute to increased continuance commitment. Moreover, it is found in the research of Park et al., (2014) that continuance commitment is highly related to the retention and loyalty of the employees.

5.2 Conclusion

Organisational learning practices are considered as a significant element to ensure the organisational commitment of employees within an organisation. The fundamental focus of this research was to evaluate the impact of learning organisation practices on affective, normative, and continuous commitment in the IT sector of Karachi. The research concludes that connecting environments, inquiry and dialogue, creating systems, empowering employees, team learning and collaboration have significant relationships with affective commitment. In addition to this, the research concludes that normative commitment has significant relations with continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, collaboration and team learning, empowering employees, creating systems, and strategic leadership. Lastly, it has been found in this research that continuous commitment has significant relationships between continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, collaboration and team learning, empowering employees, creating systems, and connecting environment.



5.3 Policy Implications/Recommendations

It has been found that organisational commitment, continuous learning, strategic leadership collaboration and team learning, inquiry and dialogue, connecting environment, creating systems, and empowering employees has an impact on affective commitment that exist within the organisation. Therefore, it is essential for managers to incorporate these variables to gain organisational commitment. Furthermore, organisational commitment, continuous learning, strategic leadership collaboration and team learning, inquiry and dialogue, connecting environment, creating systems, and empowering employees has an impact on continuance and normative organisational commitment. Therefore, each of these variables is recommended to be implemented on the basis of organisational need. The implications of this research indicate that managers and decision makers have the ability to increase organisational commitment and direct it towards organisational performance.

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