

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING READINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVE THINKING EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between readiness for self-directed learning and organizational creative thinking effectiveness. The hypotheses that guided this investigation related to the relationship between readiness for self-directed learning and organizational creative thinking effectiveness in several companies in Taiwan.

The results of the study showed significant relationship between SDLRS and organizational creative thinking effectiveness. Recommendations suggested that manager should help employees become ready for self-directed learning in order to improve organizational creative thinking effectiveness.

Keywords: Self-Directed Learning, *organizational creative thinking*

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century--the Knowledge Age--corporations will see workers as intellectual capital. Workers themselves, rather than just information, will become the resources that allow organizations to respond quickly and effectively to rapid change. Learning is at the core of these demands--whether it's learning a new skill, knowing how to manage existing and new knowledge, or creating organizational structures that support continuous learning. This study introduces learners to a new focus on performance improvement based on knowledge as the competitive advantage. Self-directed learning is the foundation for the Knowledge Age. Well-conceived implementation of self-directed learning is crucial for the success of learning organizations in the 21st century.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS/HYPOTHESES

Self-directed learning is really mean to every organization, especially in knowledge worker age in the 21st century. Understand how to manage organization's support for self-directed learning become key factor for effectiveness. Thus, this study was tried to find out the questions below: (1) Recognize the importance of self-directed learning. (2) Identify the most important aspect of most

definitions of self-directed learning. (3) Identify the advantages of self-directed learning for the 21st century organization. (4) Identify roles trainers can play in self-directed learning.

The implementation of successful programs for learner has been shown to have a positive economic impact on businesses. There are four hypotheses being tested are: H1: Environment setting is positively associated with readiness of self-directed learning. H2: Manager's attitudes are positively associated with learning satisfaction. H3: Organizational culture is positively associated with Readiness of self-directed learning. H4: Readiness of self-directed learning is positively associated with organizational creative thinking effectiveness.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the new Knowledge Age, the only successful organizations will be those that know how to gather, support, and manage knowledge. Manager or trainer who wants to improve performance, they need support from the corporate culture and environment setting. This study was to discover what factors make up a learning organization, how to assess whether your organization has them, how to train leaders to support them, and how to create them if they're missing.

DEFINITION OF TERMS**1. Self-Directed Learning :**

Self-directed training includes the learner initiating the learning, making the decisions about what training and development experiences will occur, and how. The learner selects and carries out their own learning goals, objectives, methods and means to verify that the goals were met. The most commonly accepted definitions of self-teaching (Tough, 1976) and of self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975) emphasize the fact of the learner's control over the planning and execution of learning.

2. Creative Thinking:

A way of looking at problems or situations from a fresh perspective that suggests unorthodox solutions (which may look unsettling at first). Creative thinking can be stimulated both by an unstructured process such as brainstorming, and by a structured process such as lateral thinking. (Business dictionary)

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**Self-Directed Learning**

John Dewey said, "Education and learning is the matter of lifelong process" (Dewey, 1938). The works of Brookfield (1980) and Thiel (1984) form another point of view that is related to the field-independence and field-dependence constructs. This approach added attitude to our understanding of self-directed education. Even (1982) went on to point out that adult education philosophy appears to favor the self-directedness implicit in the field-independent learning styles. In our daily life, most learning is informal and self-directed in nature. We buy a book and think about the writer's viewpoint. We attend a presentation given at a local school. We take some time at the end of the day to think about our day and what we learned from it. These are all informal forms of self-directed learning. Self-directed learning is one of the best and most efficacious ways of learning in the lifelong learning process. Sound and valid organizational support can make self-directed learning go more smoothly and successfully (Kidd, 1973). We all know that creating "self-directed learners" will improve the quality of democratic participation, and ultimately the quality of life, because self-directed learning must inevitably produce more self-determining citizens.

According to Candy (1991), Self-directed learning is viewed as one of the most common ways in which adults pursue learning throughout their life span. People supplement and at times substitute self-directed learning for learning received in formal settings. On the other hand, one of lifelong learning's principles is to equip people with the skills and competencies necessary to continue their own "self-education" beyond the completion of formal schooling. Self-directed learning, then, is seen as simultaneously a means and an end to lifelong education (Candy, 1991).

In 1971 Allen Tough was among the first to research the areas of self-directed learning and the learner. Tough examined the idea of what he named Adult Learning Projects. His findings suggested that approximately 90 percent of all adults conduct at least one major learning effort learning project each year. His findings also suggested that the average person conduct five to seven separate learning projects in one year. Those are found in five distinct areas of knowledge, skill, or personal change. He also found that a person spends an average of one hundred hours per learning effort in a year which adds up to a total of five hundred hours in all of his or her efforts in the year. This represents an average of almost ten hours a week (Tough, 1971).

In contrast, the results of a study by Linares (1988) found that students between thirty-one to fifty years of age demonstrated more self-directed learning readiness when measured by the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS).

Self-Directed Learning Readiness

In order to develop an estimate of an individual's inner-outer directness in the context of learning, the SDLRS was created. This context and the orientation to adult learners make it appropriate for self-directed learning research. According to Guglielmino (1977), the instrument was developed through a three-round Delphi survey of fourteen individuals considered to be experts in the area of self-directed learning. These included adult educators such as Knowles, Tough, and Houle. After its revision, the instrument was administered to people in Georgia, Vermont, and Canada that included approximately 307 people. An additional revision of the scale was made and a reliability coefficient of .87 was estimated by the instrument designers.

According to Guglielmino (1977), the average score for adults completing the questionnaire is 214. The standard deviation is 25.59. Guglielmino (1977) pointed out that individuals with highly developed self-directed learning skills tend to perform better in jobs requiring (1) a high degree of problem solving ability, (2) a high degree of creativity, (3) a high degree of change. Guglielmino also defined five levels of score; 58-176--low, 177-201--below average, 202-226--average, 227-251--above average, 252-290--high. Persons with high SDLRS scores usually prefer to determine their learning needs and implement their own learning. This does not mean that they will never choose to be in a structured learning situation. They may well choose traditional courses or workshops as part of a learning plan. People with high SDLRS scores are more likely to be successful in more independent situations, but not fully comfortable with handling the entire process of identifying their learning needs and planning and implementing the learning. People with below average SDLRS scores usually prefer very structured learning options such as lecture and traditional classroom settings.

Self-Directed Learning and Organizational Performance

Self-directed learning becomes even more powerful when it's systematic, that is, when we decide: 1. What areas of knowledge and skills we need to gain in order to get something done (our learning needs and goals) 2. How we will gain the areas of knowledge and skills (our learning objectives and activities) 3. How we will know that we've gained the areas of knowledge and skills (learning evaluation). In Fact, Self-directed learning is ideal for the workplace. Self-directed learning programs hold numerous advantages over traditional forms of classroom instruction for employees in the workplace. Passing down acquired competencies to succeeding cohorts; accommodating the demands of productivity while providing for a continuity of learning; enabling learners to pursue activities that correspond to their learning styles and needs"

Self-directed learning is more effective in development because learning accommodates employees' learning styles and objectives. Self-directed learning can save substantial training costs because learners learn to help themselves and each other with practical and timely materials. Self-directed learning can increase employee effectiveness in their jobs as they learn to learn from

their own work experiences and actually apply their learning in their places of work.

Abbott and Dahmus (1992), pointed out that SDL has several advantages over formal instruction. First, the learning content can be matched to individuals' needs. Second, there is greater flexibility in timing (i.e., learners can work at their own pace and on their own schedule) and the availability of learning resources. Third, SDL can be quite responsive to individuals' changing needs for information and skills. And fourth, SDL can be very cost effective for organizations. Employees shouldering the responsibility for their own training greatly reduces the time and financial costs organizations invest in training and program development. SDL training programs may be even more cost-effective when consistent training across multiple sites is needed because fewer qualified instructors are required (Piskurich, 1991).

Self-Directed Learning lead to successful outcomes

Big companies, such like 3M and Google, strategic allows their employees to have 15 % to 20% working time off. In those companies, workers often use 15 percent time to pursue something they discovered through the usual course of work but didn't have time to follow up on. It might seem like a squishy employee benefit. But the time has actually produced many of the company's best-selling products. A well-known example of a permitted bootleg product is the yellow sticky Post-it note developed by Arthur Fry and Spencer Silver at 3M. Another famous example is Google, where employees are allowed to spend up to 20% of their work time in personal projects related to the company's business. Several services provided by Google such as Gmail, Google News, Orkut and AdSense were originally created by employees in their work time. Besides 3 M and Google, HP Company also allows their employees have 10 percent off after lunch on Fridays. Imagine what it must have been like on Friday afternoons in Palo Alto with every engineer working on some wild-ass idea. And the other part of the system was that those engineers had access to what they called "lab stores"—anything needed to do the job, whether it was a microscope or a magnetron or a barrel of acetone could be taken without question on Friday afternoons from the HP warehouses. This enabled a flurry of innovation that produced some of HP's

greatest products including those printers. At Hewlett-Packard, 3M, and Google, "many" of their best and most popular products come from the thin sliver of time they granted employees to work on whatever they wanted to.

METHODOLOGY

There are two methodology conducts this study: Quantitative Survey Research and Qualitative Study.

Qualitative Study

The first phase of the research will investigate the tasks being performed within subunits of a multinational service companies, and discover which learning tools are used to facilitate the self-directed learning processes within those departments. Through group interviews, information will be obtained from individuals ($n \geq 50$) throughout the firm at various levels and groups ($n \geq 5$). In order to familiarize participants with concepts related to self-directed learning, interviewees will be sent an information packet prior to the interview. The packet will include the same open-ended questions used in the previous study: (1) What is the role of manager? (2) Who/what do you consider being the best sources of learning within your organization? (3) Why is this learning so important? (4) How is this self-directed learning skills captured? Disseminated? Accessed?

Quantitative Survey Research / Instrumentation

Based on the findings of the first phase, we will develop a questionnaire according to SDLRS to empirically test the four research hypotheses. The Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale questionnaire was developed by Lucy Guglielmino. The purpose of this instrument is to assess an individual's learning preferences and attitudes toward self-directed learning, and it is used to measure readiness for self-directed learning. There are fifty-eight multiple-choice questions that assess readiness for self-directed learning. Since its development in 1977, the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) has been utilized in an increasingly large number of investigations throughout the U. S. and Canada. A large body of research supports the validity and reliability of the SDLRS. Reliability estimates have been high. There are four areas of Guglielmino's research work that have particularly significant implications for the reliability and validity of the SDLRS. These are the following: (1) the use of the Delphi technique as the basis for item

generation, (2) the definition of the terms "readiness" and "self-directed learner," (3) the use of negatively phrased items, and (4) the incorporation of additional items after validation of the scale. The reliability of the SDLRS was estimated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The computed value of coefficient alpha was 0.89. Because a value of coefficient alpha above 0.80 suggest a high degree of homogeneity, this finding indicate that the SDLRS measures a fairly homogeneous construct. The Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale also has a Chinese edition, which was developed by the same company, Guglielmino & Associates, Inc. The reliability and validity of the SDLRS Chinese edition is the same as English edition. The Chinese edition of the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale was used as instrumentation in this study.

FINDINGS

This section contains the results of the study and an analysis of the data. The problem statement of this study was to investigate the relationship between readiness for self-directed learning and organizational creative thinking effectiveness. As part of this, the study examined if there is differences between high SDLRS and low SDLRS employees with job performance and organizational creative thinking effectiveness. The data analysis presented in this section was based upon responses to the instrument (SDLRS) questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using the SPSS statistical analysis computer program. The data were analyzed using frequencies, means, Pearson product-moment correlations, and independent sample t tests. The three selected factors—manager attitude, environment setting and organizational culture were used as status factors in the data analysis. Based on the statement of the problem, it has been found that there was significant found in all hypothesis 1 to 4. In other word, there was significant relationship between readiness for self-directed learning and organizational creative thinking effectiveness. There was also significant relationship between readiness for self-directed learning and manager attitude, organizational culture and organizational environments setting.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Researchers all agree that the basic economic resource of the 21st century will be knowledge. This study point out that knowledge is an organizational competitive advantage. Most organization gathers it through organizational continuous learning, using it for performance improvement, and managing it to build intellectual assets and human capital. Learn how the focus on performance improvement and quality products leads to continuous learning. Find out what learning organizations are and why they'll be the only success stories of the future. Discover what learning skills are crucial and how to get them. Set up a personal learning plan. Probably the most important skill for today's rapidly changing workforce is skills in self-directed learning. The highly motivated, self-directed learner with skills in self-reflection can approach the workplace as a continual classroom from which to learn.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between organizational creative thinking effectiveness and employee's readiness for self-directed learning and to find the possible factors which may affect readiness for self-directed learning. The first part of the review of related literature indicated that continues organizational training and learning is our organizational goal. Every organization should educate employees to have self-directed learning skills while they are in organization. In the near future, society should become a learning society in which learning opportunities meet learner needs. Relevant literature and research related to self-directed learning were reviewed to identify the significant importance of organizational effectiveness. Second, self-directed learning and self-directed learning readiness were reviewed to support the need and overall rationale for this study. In a review of self-directed learning, self-directed learning skills should be emphasized as a survival skill for the future. Every learner should have self-directed learning skills because learning opportunities, learning methods, and so on will be different in the future.

Recommendation

The manager's attitude and knowledge about self-directed learning has a tremendous impact on the development of employees and organizational effectiveness. According to the research finding and literature review (Thomas D. Fisher 2002), this study made some recommendation for manager which are listed below: (1) Manager should help the employees identify the starting point for a learning project and discern relevant of examination and reporting. (2) Manager should create a partnership with the employees by negotiating a learning contract for goals, strategies and evaluation criteria. (3) Organization should teach inquiry skills, decision making, personal development, and self-evaluation of work. (4) Manager should help employees develop positive attitudes and feelings of independence relative to learning. (5) Manager should create an atmosphere of openness and trust to promote better performance. (6) Manager should provide opportunities for self-directed learners to reflect on what they're learning. Finally, (7) Manager should provide staff training on self-directed learning and broaden the opportunities for its implementation

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