

Analyzing Learning Environment: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector Schools of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study is to investigate learning orientation between public sector schools and private schools of Pakistan. This study is analyzed by a tool developed by Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ). Data is being collected through questionnaires. All seven dimensions (continues learning, dialogue inquiry, team learning, embedded system, empowerment, system connection and leadership) are being analyzed, which includes forty-three variables, individually and then collectively too. Total means are used in order to compare both sectors of education. On the basis of total mean scores, both sectors are being analyzed which shows that there is a significant difference between public and private sector schools as far as learning orientation is concerned. Empowerment variable is a variable that needs improvement in public sector schools to improve the learning orientation in this sector.*

Keywords: DLOQ, Public sector schools, private sector schools, Employee Empowerment, comparison between public and private

The unprecedented wave of change forces the organizations to change but the magnitude and direction of change may vary from organization to organization. The evolutionary model of change by “Charles Darwin” seems applicable on learning of organizations because only those organizations survive which learn rapidly.

The (Senge and Sterman 1992) organizations and defined that in Learning organization people continually improve their skills to get desired results and creative thinking is nurtured. The people also learn the new patterns of learning. Senge’s model of learning comprises of (Senge 1993).

Systems thinking: unite knowledge from different disciplines, concentrates on totality rather than individuality.

Personal mastery: leads the people to boost up their abilities to achieve desired goals individually and wholly.

Mental models: relate to fixed pattern of thinking and taken for granted beliefs embedded in the subconscious, which create hindrance to move in new directions.

Team learning: direct that people are not only the set of individuals but are basic learning unites of an organization. Their individual and collective efforts lead an organization towards the learning path. (Senge, p.10)

Shared vision: depicts the share picture of future, which encompasses the individual personal visions.

Garvin, 1985 says, "(Garvin 1985) and at modifying behavior to reflect new knowledge and insight". According to Garvin, 1985, the learning organization has ability to modify the behavior of people by creating, acquiring and injecting the new knowledge. In today’s rapidly changing environment, if an organization needs to stay at top level then sustaining a competitive advantage is the most important factor. If an organization is capable of sustaining competitive advantage against its competitors then that organization could sustain its position in the market for longer period of time else if an organization is not capable of sustaining any kind of competitive advantage then that organization is moving towards slow death.

Nowadays, continuous learning is considered as the most appropriate way by which an organization could compete in this rapidly changing environment. Not only individual learning, but organization has to learn as a whole in order to become a learning organization. It is true that, individuals has to learn too but to get the synergy effect, they must learn as teams so that

organizations could gain benefit from those teams else it would be considered as only individual learning instead of organization learning. In organizations, sharing knowledge and experience is an important component of learning and this is one of the important element through which organization could learn as a whole.

In education sector, learning is a major factor that could make a difference among the organizations. Schools, colleges and universities are the main source from which scholars are being produced and that’s the source from which creative thinking’s base is being furnished and provide them a platform through which they could prosper in their lives. This comparative study is between Public and Private Education Sectors of Pakistan. For the time being, this study is based upon the schools of public and private sector only. It will help in differentiating them on the basis of learning environment.

For this purpose, twenty four schools have been taken and among them twelve are from government sector and twelve are from private sector. All these organizations have been taken as a sample but on the condition of anonymity. There is a well-developed toolkit “Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire” (DLOQ) have been used in order to carry out the required results.

Literature Review

David Garvin provides a complete criterion of learning organization concept and offers three building blocks i.e. a supportive learning environment, Concrete learning processes, Leadership that reinforces learning, to assess the learning of an organization. Learning activities in schools are not associated with formalized classroom teacher and students activities. We are part of a world where the disruptive changes force us to change for survival in competition by innovation, quality and customization in business. (Christensen and Overdorf 2000). Gilbert says that individual learning is not necessarily learning of organization. Peter Senge is also convinced that individual learning not ensures the organizational learning but is a step towards organizational learning. The continuous changing environment, demands news skills, new way of thinking and updated knowledge and if we do not correlate changing environment and future expectations of knowledge, skills and competencies, We are training human resource for current needs not for future needs (Vaughan 2008).

The rate at which individuals and organizations learn may become the only sustainable competitive advantage, especially in knowledge-intensive industries.(Patterson

1999) The concept of learning organizations is diving into three parts namely (1) knowledge acquisition and insight, (2) habit and skill learning, and (3) emotional conditioning and learned anxiety(Schein 1996). Schools having rate of learning greater than the rate of change in environment are learning organizations(Garratt 1990). The school culture; structure, resources and leadership are key characteristics for schools to be labeled as learning organizations. The culture of school consist of a set of norms including respect for colleagues' mutual support, creative ideas, risk taking to implement new idea, the exchange of honest and candid feedback, shared celebrations of successes, a strong focus on the needs and informal sharing of ideas and resources, and continuous professional growth(Leithwood, Leonard et al. 1998). The school structure that involves staff teacher in decision-making is more supportive learning organization. The participation from principal significantly contributed to improve organizational learning in schools.

From an examination of the literature, seven dimensions that characterize schools as learning organizations were identified and these define what organizational learning means

From an examination of the literature, seven dimensions that characterize schools as learning organizations were identified and these define what is meant by organizational learning.

Environmental scanning: describes the activities which help to improve the school functions and decision making. Collaboration is the culture of openness and trust which promotes cooperation, support, and involvement in the school activities.

Taking initiatives and risks: shows the ability to take professional risks for personal and school improvement.

Review: encompasses to reevaluate the programs and actions.

Recognition and reinforcement: is to acknowledge and value the personal efforts.

Continuing professional development: refers to provide the resources and opportunities to school staff for learning.

Vision and goals: gives the purpose and unified efforts to specific direction.

“Developing a learning organization is not an overnight process but it comes from the cultivated attitudes,

commitments and management processes that accumulate slowly and steadily” (Garvin 1985). “Active and versatile learners subsequently consider themselves more frequently involved and engaged in leadership behaviors as compared to others”(Brown and Posner 2001).

“In Pakistan, factors of supportive learning like psychological safety and time for reflection are considered as very important but private organizations have more supportive learning as compared to public sector organizations” (Ali, Bajwa et al.). “The organizations which implemented the four aspects namely learning at work, organizational learning, developing a learning climate and creating learning structures should be considered as learning organizations and organizations which have implemented only one aspect should be considered as partial learning organizations”(Örtenblad 2004). “The relationship between interpersonal trust and commitment to organization is explained by the mediating variable and that is learning organization culture”(Song, Kim et al. 2009). Learning Organization is an organization in which people would share not only firsthand knowledge with each other but also adopt the changing environment rapidly by expanding their capabilities(Hitt 1995). Nowadays, learning organization starts from knowledge management and one can't say that which one is more important as both have equal significance in developing the ability of an organization to learn(Aggestam 2006).

Performance of the organization and learning of organization depends upon each other and it has a positive relationship with each other(Marsick and Watkins 2003). Total quality management heavily depends upon the learning of an organization along with other factors like information analysis, knowledge management and understanding of environment but the factor that heavily makes impacts is learning(Terziovski, Howel et al. 2000). To get significant growth, leaders of learning organizations have to improve their learning capabilities and capacities to perform the decisive role in leading the organization(Marquardt 2000). Learning is not an overnight process that one can adopt it in an overnight but it's a gradual process and to adopt learning, development of organization, identification of its needs, fulfilling these needs and then implementing the learning are basic pillars that should be laid in an organization in order to develop the habit of learning(Armstrong and Foley 2003).

“Learning is a continuous process and a learning organization should be an everlasting state of an organization, because of the continuous need for learning”(Moilanen 2001). “In learning organizations new ways of behaving is a product of new

knowledge”(Giesecke and McNeil 2004). Learning organizations has to develop an organic structure within the organization and it is considered as an essential component for these kinds of organizations(Mishra and Bhaskar 2010). Learning Organization is not a day dreaming but a very prospective approach that would help you to create a sustainable competitive advantage. It’s a kind of advantage that can’t be copied as integration of learning is a slow process and every organization has its own pluses and minuses through which it has to develop an environment of learning ((Zamin Abbas, Murad et al. 2011). “In order to convert the university to a learning organization, the university should strengthened and prioritize their policy for people subsystem. It should be mentioned that university’s first major goal of the strategic four-year program has been promoting quality human resources”(Rafat, Hasan et al. 2012). Professional development and collaborative environment are two dimensions that are used to represent professional development especially in secondary schools (Silins, Zarins et al. 2002).

Research Methodology

The main hypothesis of this study is to find out that public and private sector schools have equal learning level and for this purpose, means are being compared. 150 questionnaires were distributed out of which 100 responses were received. The questionnaire deals with seven different dimensions and hence is very effective in analyzing the learning level of these organizations. The questionnaire which was used has a 5-point Likert scale value where 1= never to 5= always.

For checking and analyzing the reliability of data, coefficient of cronbach alpha was used and its result are shown in table1 and table2. The results are showing that all variables are above 70% and as per Sekaran, they all are acceptable. Independent t-test was used in order to calculate mean and standard deviation of the data along with equality of means too so that it could be compared for both public and private sector.

Findings and Discussions

The analyses regarding the factor structure of DLOQ and school effectiveness measure i.e. its reliability to test supportive learning environment between public and private schools we performed reliability Analysis.

Table #1:
Over All Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.950	.950	43

The above table shows value of Cronbach’s Alpha for the total DLOQ model. Our DLOQ model consists of 43 items. The responses were collected through DLOQ instrument. The Cronbach Alpha for the total DLOQ model was 0.950.It shows high reliability of the tool which means that all the items included in the questionnaire measure the supportive learning environment.

Table #2:

Dimension-wise Reliability Statistics

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Dimension #1	.736
Dimension #2	.773
Dimension #3	.854
Dimension #4	.766
Dimension #5	.770
Dimension #6	.751
Dimension #7	.738

The 43 items are divided into 7 dimensions by Marsick, Watkins, and Yang (2004). The Cronbach Alpha for each dimension works out individually as shown in Table#2. All the dimensions show acceptable reliability but less than over all models which indicate that there is no quantifiable benefit over individual dimension.

We used Independent T-test to evaluate supportive learning level between public and private schools. The main purpose of T-test is to compare means of two groups for accepting or rejecting null or alternative hypothesis.

Our Null Hypothesis= Ho: Both groups Public and Private don't have equal Means (learning level)

Our Alternative Hypothesis=H1: Both groups Public and Private have equal Means (learning level)

Table #3(a)

Dimensions	Public Schools		Private Schools	
	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev
Continuous Learning	3.2257	.72101	3.5114	.70819
Dialogue Inquiry	3.3667	.69661	3.7567	.86384
Team Learning	3.3200	.97581	3.7233	.94017
Embedded System	3.2767	.89886	3.6100	.73818
Empowerment	3.1367	.83074	3.2600	.80048
System Connection	3.5067	.83974	3.3867	1.10217
Leadership	3.4567	.87599	3.5767	.93448
Total	23.2892	5.83876	24.8248	6.08951

From table 3(b), it is clear that total mean of public schools is less as compared to the mean of private sector schools which clearly indicates that public sector schools are less learning oriented as compared to private sector schools. Public schools has to focus on empowerment as it is lacking behind all other factors due to which total mean of public sector schools is also getting low.

Table 3(b)

Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
DLOQ Public	50	3.3270	.69777	.09868
Private	50	3.5464	.69042	.09764

The table 3(b) shows that mean for public and private schools in the Group Statistics. The Mean for Private Schools is 3.5464 against 3.3270 for Public Schools. It predicts that the learning in private schools is almost equal to the learning in public schools.

Table #4
Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
DLOQ Equal variances assumed	430	.514	-1.580	98	.117	-.21939	.13882	-.49487	.05610	
Equal variances not assumed			-1.580	97.989	.117	-.21939	.13882	-.49487	.05610	

The above table#4 shows that the p-value is .514 which

is greater than level of significance (.05).So mean (learning level) between public and private schools is not equal and our "Null hypothesis" is accepted. It means that learning orientation is not equal between public sector schools and private sector schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As per the findings of this study, public sector schools are less learning oriented as compared to private sector schools. Dialogue inquiry, team learning, and embedded systems are the dimensions that should be looked upon in public sector schools as they are lacking among the private sector. Without team learning, an organization can't be a learning organization so public sector organizations should take this component seriously in order to gain competitive advantage in today's competitive environment.

This study has some limitations that it is being carried out at a specific sector by taking a specific sample size so this study should be further implemented at other sectors too by taking larger sample sizes as compared to this one.

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