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Would perceived organizational support moderate the relationship between innovative behavior of employee and Islamic learning organization

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Abstract

The uniqueness of this era is that we are living in, is the amount of information available to us. In fact, organizations have a better chance to thrive and excel than ever before. On the other hand, it is becoming way more challenging than ever to survive due to the exact same reason; availability of knowledge. This makes organizations have only one-way direction that is learning or otherwise failing. Thus, the concept of Learning Organization has emerged. Since then, it has been recommended to be contextualized for a more realistic implementation. Hence, the concept Islamic Learning Organization has come to the exist recently and yet to be developed and tested.

Keywords: Learning organization, perceived organizational support, innovative behavior of employee

1. Introduction

The Learning Organization has been a popular concept lately. It was first introduced by Peter Senge' a practitioner and a scholar in his book "the fifth discipline" published in 1991. The concept then took off and many other authors contributed to it such as Watkins and Marisk, Andre Ortinblad and others.

What very interesting here is that Ortinblad and other authors including Senge had heavily asserted that the concept Learning Organization needs to be contextualized in order to be a successfully implemented. The cultural environment where the organization is seems to have a great impact on how successful an organization can adopt the Learning Organization model and truly use it for building its competitive advantage.

Many authors took the learning organization and applied it to a set of organizations that are in a different cultural environment. And what is meant by "other" here is a non-western environment. Aini Ahmad a researcher from Malaysia contributed to the contextualization of the Learning Organization. Indeed, Ahmad did a paper and a PhD thesis on the concept Learning Organization from an Islamic perspective. Alqolaq *et al.* and Yazam *et al.* took the Learning Organization further ahead by introducing the Islamic Learning Organization.

This paper aims to further illustrate the Islamic LO by trying to explain the antecedents under the theory of Learning Organization.

2. Islamic Learning Organization

One of the most outstanding management ideas created in the 20th century is the concept of 'learning organization'. It was created by Peter Senge, an academic from the School of Management in Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA in 1990. He was virtually unknown outside the academic world until he laid down the foundation showing organizations how to use five disciplines to ensure continued growth and prosperity. His starting point is that no firm, however big or successful, is guaranteed to survive for a long time (Senge, 1990) [1]. According to him, the average life of a Fortune 500 company in USA was around 40 years. The central questions that he sets out to answer are: how can companies that have excelled and reached the top collapse suddenly (such as People Express Airlines) and why do other companies survive and prosper? The answer that he found was that the companies that managed to survive over time have succeeded in creating themselves into 'learning organizations' (Senge 1990) [1].

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But Senge's conception of a learning organization (LO) is meant for Western-based organizations or capitalistic organizations. An emerging realization among scholars lately is that not all organizations worldwide are capitalistic organizations. Some organizations in Muslim countries as well as in the West operate on Islamic management principles (Sharif 2014)^[2]. This paper aims to review some literature on learning organizations from the Western literature and also from the Islamic literature and then develops a suitable research framework to study organizations in Muslim context.

3. Learning Organization (LO) from the Western Origin

Over time, several definitions of learning organization have been developed by scholars. But this paper would like to highlight just seven prominent definitions which have been widely cited (Table 1). The concept of learning organization was made popular through Peter Senge's (1990)^[1] publication called 'The Fifth Discipline'. He defined a learning organization as an organization which encourages continuous learning among its employees. Other scholars such as Garvin, Pedler *et al.* and Watkins and Marsick added other elements such as the existence of learning climate and transformation among the organization's members on a continuous basis that would assist in the practices of a learning organization (Senge 1990, Garvin 1993, Pedler *et al.*, 1991, Watkins & Marsick 1996)^[1, 3, 4, 5]. These authors believe that in spite of the diverse increase in the learning organization models over time, Senge's model seems to be most the most widely cited by other scholars. As such, the authors of this article will give emphasis on the review of this particular model. According to Senge, a learning organization exhibits five main characteristics: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, a shared vision, and team learning (Senge 1990)^[1].

4. Learning Organization from the Islamic Perspective

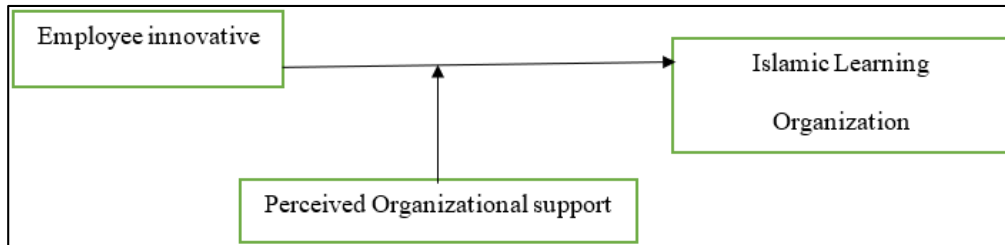
Scholars have viewed that the adaptation of learning organization in different contexts has become a well-discussed topic of discussion. However, some scholars have stated that not much has been written on learning organization in a religious context (Sharif 2014, Ahmad 2013)^[2, 6]. Ahmad has attempted to study on how Islam views the concept of learning organization (Ahmad 2010, Ahmad 2011)^[7, 8]. Apart from that, Sharif recently studied the determinants of Islamic learning organization and suggested that the learning organization from Islamic perspective should be labelled as 'Islamic Learning Organization' to reflect its growing importance (Sharif 2014)^[2] and that it is slightly different than the earlier learning organization created by Senge and other Western models (Senge 1990, Garvin 1993, Pedler *et al.*, 1991, Watkins & Marsick 1996)^[1, 3, 4, 5]. What can be said is that the learning organization in the Islamic perspective or the Islamic learning organization (ILO) is a slowly emerging research area within the learning organization literature. Organizations under ILO are Syariah-compliant, i.e. they follow the Islamic rules and regulations as laid down in the Quran, the holy book in Islam.

5. Islamic Learning Organization:

If the concept of Islamic learning organization (ILO) can be accepted by scholars, then one aspect of the ILO that needs to be investigated is to determine the ILO outcome so that it be measured. The outcome of ILO can be viewed from the Islamic management principles that it follows. In Islam, the 'Tauhid' (the deep practice) is important (Kazemian, Ghamgosar 2011, Mohiuddin 2012)^[9, 10]. 'Tauhid' is about relations (Mohiuddin 2012)^[10]. It is divided into two types: 1) *Hablumminallah* – relationship between mankind and God and 2) *Hablumminannas* – relationships between human beings (Ather & Sobhani 2007)^[11]. The focus on the development of people in society and in organizations is given high importance in Islam (Abuznaid 2006)^[12]. People are important to society and organizations as they are regarded as leaders on earth (Khalifah), a role designated by God (Razimi *et al.*, 2014, Sulaiman *et al.* 2014)^[13, 14]. To carry out these duties, human beings must abide by some rules (designated as Islamic management principles) (Weir 2008, Zangouinezhad 2011)^[15, 16]. These principles can be divided into five: 1) Consultation (Syura) in all decision making; 2) Discipline; 3) Cooperation; 4) Justice in work distribution and 5) Trustees on earth (Ahmad 2006, Branine & Pollard 2010)^[17, 18].

6. Perceived Organizational Support as a moderator between Islamic work Ethics and Islamic Learning Organization

The concept of perceived organizational support (POS) was created by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa (Eisenberger *et al.* 1986)^[19]. It describes the employee's perception about organizational commitment with respect to his or her welfare (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002, Suazo & Turnley 2010)^[19, 21]. It also refers to employees' belief about the degree to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their contribution. It is also defined as a social exchange relationship which is the resultant from exchanges between the organization and its employees (Eisenberger *et al.* 1986)^[19]. Based on the organization support theory, development of perceived organizational support is encouraged by employees' intention to assign the human-like characteristics to organization (Mankanjee *et al.* 2006)^[22]. The employees who perceive a high level of organizational support believe that the organization cares about them and values their cooperation. Frequently researchers have mentioned the importance of potential role of employees' perception on organizational support (Zacher & Winter 2011)^[23]. Eisenberger *et al.* argued that the different factors such as organizational rewards, which are presented to employees in the form of appreciation, money, encouragement and credit are effective forms of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger *et al.* 1986)^[19]. All these rewards would imply that employees are valuable to organizations concerned. Thus, POS has the potential to moderate between the antecedents and consequences in a situation (Mankanjee *et al.* 2006, Allen *et al.*, 2003, Shore & Tetrick 1991)^[22, 24, 25].



Research framework

7. Conclusion

This paper aims to illustrate some of what could be used to explain the emerging concept of Islamic Learning Organization. However, perceived organizational support seems to fill in a gap between the independent variable Islamic work ethics and the dependent variable Islamic Learning organization. However, this is a concept paper and it is recommended it gets carried out on an empirical study to further test the hypothesized framework.

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