

Learning Organization Assessment of TPK Worldwide Solutions Company Limited

CHON TANUNCHAI*

Abstract

Sustainable human resource development has become an essential key success factor for an organization. This independent study focusses on the assessment of Learning Organization for TPK Worldwide Solutions Company Limited by basing the foundational ideology of Learning Organization by Peter Senge is used as a corner stone comprised of personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and system thinking. Through analysis of responses from the translated survey based on the 7 actions imperatives of Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire developed by Marsick and Watkins (1998). Respondents' perceptions are subjected for descriptive analysis to establish frequencies through percentiles, means averages, and cross tabulations of the means averages classification by gender, job positions and length of employment. The findings illustrate that perception level of respondents were rated within the range of moderate sentiment. The discoveries can be appraised as beneficial information and guidance for further Human Resources developmental endeavors.

Keywords: Learning Organization Dimensions, TPK Worldwide Solutions Company Limited.

Introduction and Problem Statement

Globalization in the 21st century has not only provided opportunities for potential market expansion but has also perpetuate highly complex business environment. Establishing performance competencies in lieu of today's complex global market structure no longer requires organization to effectively utilize its internal tangible resources for outcome maximization, but corporations must also engage and evaluates its ability for continual development through learning organizational transformation of internal intangible commodities to gain total competitive advantage. Learning in organizations with the purpose of making employees to feel empowerment has shown to be a significant factor in organizational successfulness, adaptation to changes and helping organizations to survive longer than their counterparts (Asadi, Ghorbani, & Naderan, 2009; Dirani, 2009; Marsick, 2009; Ortenbald, 2004b; Watkins & Marsick, 2003).

The notion that firm must seek superior competitive advantage through the application of dynamic business plans that integrates creativity and innovativeness to ensure long term sustainability (Marimutthu, Arokiasamy, and Ismail 2009). Human capital is an important input for organizations with regards to employee's continuous improvement

* นักศึกษาหลักสูตรบริหารธุรกิจมหาบัณฑิตสำหรับผู้บริหาร มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่ (Master of Business Administration, Chiang Mai University)

through knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes which facilitate in the creation of personal, social and economic well-being (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development or OECD, 2001, p. 18) Many organizations in various countries of the world have preferred to adapt learning organization, because of its profound impacts on professional and skill development of their employees (Alam, 2009; Jamali & Yusuf, 2009).

Recognizing the need for Human Resources development to secure sustainable growth and flexibility, TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd has previously implemented developmental projects for both professional and personal level targeting at improving staff's productivity and security through various knowledge application workshops. However, the implementation of such efforts has been sparse without any specific guidelines to determine specific areas of development. Despite improvement in overall annual performance, key improvement prerogatives are still unclear as to where financial investment is needed to sustain achievement. Resulting from the lack from specific guidelines, investments on human capital development has been insufficient and sporadic. Measurement specifications from the Dimension of the Learning Organization Questionnaires will enable TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd. with the ability to ascertain and prioritize key developmental areas necessary for the continuation of its Human Development programs.

TPK Worldwide Solutions Company Limited

TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd. was established in 2014 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. An Information Management Company specializes in Healthcare Business Process Operations (Healthcare BPO), essentially directly responsible for all professional back office support endeavors of a multi-national Healthcare corporation through the utilization of Business Process Outsourcing Services to streamline operational processes and offset cost burden from unnecessary peripheral job processes. Business Process Outsourcing Services (BPO) endeavors has the capability to enhance organization's ability to achieve corporate advantage through internal performance optimization.

The organization structure is divided into three hierarchal operative levels which comprised of: Department Heads (6), Assistant Department Heads (9) and General Staff populations (31) and are responsible for 6 main job functions through 4 departments concerning healthcare business operations, ranging from administrative supports, medical billing adjudications, collections, inventory management, electronic records management, and transport schedules. Currently, the company maintain a total workforce of 46 employees, operating a forty-hours work week with possible career advancements based on length of employments.

Current overall operational structures placed department heads as the main communicable role with foreign partners, as well as responsible for all disciplinaries activities and job functions pertaining to corresponding department. All directives and protocol changes as well as troubleshooting activities are subjected for revisions and approvals by

foreign partners. Organizational management is responsible for managing day-to-day operations, as well as manage overall finance and compensations to sustain an uninterrupted operation in accordance to local regulations.

Learning Organization Dimensions

According to Peter Senge (1990): Organizational sustainability is achieved through the ability to learn because only “learning organization” can remain immunize from changes caused by disruptive forces induced by both environmental and behavioral changes. Adaptability through innovation and creations will enable sustainable growth and ensure organizational competitive longevity. Learning Organization leads to the understanding of interconnection between all relevant components within a firm critical for overall survivability, thus eliminating gap of objectives segregation. Peter Senge introduction of Learning Organization as an alternative perspective explored solutions for sustainability because they facilitate and encourage learning within all levels of an organization to combat increasingly competitive environmental complexities. This novel concept put emphasis on individual’s learning capacity, creativity and innovativeness through group shared experiences as a primary mechanism for organizational transformation. Individuals within the firm, according the Senge’s Learning Organization concept, must be inspired to learn to perpetuate creativities within an organization to ensure long term viability.

Further illuminating on Learning Organization ideology, Professor Senge introduced the concept of the Fifth Discipline which place emphasis on firm’s learning ability and speed which is integral in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Learning must have the engagement from all level of its members based on the notion that learning is an ingrained desire in human behavior. To achieved sustainability by cultivating the notion that people are innate learner by nature and served as corner stone for developing an effective Learning Organization which consist of; Shared Vision, Mental Models, Personal Mastery, Team Learning, and System thinking.

Learning Organization, advocate a positive reinforcing relationship between firm and its human capital to cultivate an effective learning environment. Resources and implementation must have the accessibility that transcend corporate hierarchal structure to includes individual, team and overall organization. Only through shared experiences and collective creativity can optimization of benefit be achieved. As a result, individual’s development will lead to continual improvements which will increase not only individualistic potential but reflective of firm’s performance to drive sustainable growth.

Research Methods

A quantitative survey method was employed for data collection. The independent study design consists of questionnaire to assess employee’s perceptions on Learning Organization Dimensions.

Research Sample

Population used for this independent study is all 46 employees of TPK Worldwide Solutions Co. Ltd. during the first quarter of 2018 fiscal year (January– March 2018).

Instrument

Tools used to collect data for the analysis of this independent study is through questionnaires distribution which included general information consist of demographic variables. Data analysis determining respondents' perception level also uses Marsick and Watkins' Dimension of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ). The Thai language version of the questionnaire is translated by Anchaleeporn Losuwannakun (2011) with reliability tested result using Cronbach's Alpha of .985. Examination of the relationship between underlying demographic variable factors pertaining to participants such as; gender classifications, job positions and length of employment to average means effecting the implication to Learning Organization.

Validity and Reliability

Reliability assessment for Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaires (DLOQ) for Employees of TPK Worldwide Solutions Company Limited. Conducting Reliability Test basing analysis against Cronbach's Alpha method to establish questionnaire's adequacy by interpreting the level of Alpha Coefficient. Assessment for reliability or alpha (α) coefficient of the Dimension of Learning Organization Questionnaires (DLOQ) for evaluating TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd. using Cronbach's Alpha methods finds that overall reliability of the DLOQ is .962, an implication of adequate reliability range with the alpha (α) coefficient value is in the level higher than 0.9 alpha (α) coefficient.

Profile of Respondents

From analysis of data presented pertain to employees at TPK Worldwide Solutions Company Limited, finds that out of the total population pool of employees of 46, the predominant gender with 63.04% are female. Age ranges between 25 years old to 30 years old with 69.57% , most holds the position amongst the general staff population with 67.39% and have more than 1 year but less than or equal to 2 years' experience of 39.10%. Out of the total population, majorities are single with 91.30%, and held bachelor's degree of 82.61% with range of average compensation per month between 10,000 THB to 14,999 THB with 41.30%.

Result

Analysis of descriptive data yielded for this independent study is based on the utilization of the 6 level Likert scaling to establish the 6 sentiments levels of agreements that reflects Learning Organization Status for TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd through employees' perception. Calculating the range to ascertain the 6 class intervals of five divided by six which yielded an interval of 0.83. As a result: the lowest level represented by a "strongly disagreeable" sentiment falls within the interval between 1.00–1.83, "disagreeable"– 1.84–2.67, "mildly disagreeable"–2.68–3.51, "mildly agreeable"–3.52–4.34, "agreeable"– 4.35–5.17, and lastly "strongly agreeable" sentiment falls within the range of "5.18–6.00". Further overall conjecture can be made with three assumption levels that encapsulate underlying suppositions: Lowest sentiment, includes both "strongly disagreeable" and "disagreeable" sentiments, Moderate sentiment, includes both "mildly disagreeable" and "mildly agreeable" sentiment, and Highest sentiment, includes both "agreeable" and "strongly agreeable" sentiments.

Research Question 1: What is the perception level of TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd. employees in Learning Organization Dimension?

Based on responses yielded pertaining to overall means average reflecting the status of Learning Organization based on TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd. employees' perception, it was discovered that overall perception is in the moderate range with an average means of 3.53 overall, specifically identifiable with "mildly agreeable" sentiment to the company's overall achievements pertaining to be a Learning Organization. Based on the level that received the highest ranking as follow: Individual level (3.79), Global Level (3.51), Team Level (3.49) and lastly, Organizational Level (3.30). Upon closer examination on a dimensional level, it became apparent that Inquiry and Dialogue Dimension received a highest ranking with an average means of 4.07, and the lowest ranking is given to System Connection Dimension with an average means of 3.17. One significant to note is that all top five statements received highest average means all falls within the Individual Level. Whereas three out of five lowest means average received, falls within the System Connection Dimension. From this analysis, it can be concluded that overall employee's perception although moderate in sentiment share skepticism on the organization's performance pertaining to community interactions via system connections, as well as concepts of rewards as reflective both at an individual level and group level.

Research Question 2: Are there differences in employee's perception towards learning organization dimensions based on gender classifications?

Employees' perception on organization's implementation of Learning Organization initiatives separated by gender classifications finds that both male and female do share moderate sentiment which yielded an average means between 2.68–4.34. However, upon closer examination, Male respondents provided a more favorable perception (3.74) than their female counterparts (3.44).

Male respondents yielded the highest means average of 4.20 in response to the organization's support for strategic leadership for learning and lowest average means on the establishment of an embedded systems (3.37).

Female respondents yielded the highest means average of 4.01 in response to encouraging inquiry and dialogue at an individual level, and lowest average means on the establishment of an embedded systems (2.99) like male's counterparts.

Overall level responses base on gender classifications concluded that areas that most needed improvement as reflective through the lowest average means at an organizational level (3.33), follow by team or group level (3.35) and global level (3.59) and finally the least demanding is individual level (3.89).

Research Question 3: Are there differences in employee's perception towards learning organization dimensions based on job positions?

Respondents for this section of quantitative analysis is based on employees' job positions. The yielded results illuminate that there is a significant difference in the perception shared amongst department heads which eludes highest sentiment (4.39) versus those responses provided by assistant department heads and general staff combined. The latter two sectors share a closer perception reflective of moderate sentiment (3.36 and 3.42, respectively.).

Department heads gave a relatively consistent means averages amongst all dimensions, yielding both highest and lowest means averages pertaining to global perceptions. Strategic leadership for learning ranks at the very top with highest average means of 4.64 and lowest average means of 4.11 corresponding to viewpoints on system connections.

Assistant department heads, despite a close working relationship with their department heads' counterpart, shared varying perspective much like those of the general staff's population. Despite overall perception of moderate sentiments, this group views strength at an individual level through inquiry and dialogue dimensions, and shared concerns regarding the establishment of an embedded system that would ensure operational consistencies.

The general staff population, with the largest numbers, also shared a moderate sentiment reflective of Learning Organization status. Yielding the highest average means of 4.06 corresponding to inquiry and dialogue at an individual level, they shared concerns with those at the leadership level regarding establishing a valid system connectivity to external environments to enhance capability.

Again, like other various factors used to measure the status of Learning Organization for TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd., it was determined that the order of necessary implementation should start at an organizational level (3.57), followed by team/group level (3.65), global level (3.71) and individual level (3.93).

Research Question 4: Are there differences in employee's perception towards learning organization dimensions based on length of employment?

Based on the length of employment, it was shown that all respondents gave an overwhelmingly high sentiment with highest average means from all 4 groups to Inquiry and Dialogue dimension at an individual level. Overall responses are also at a moderate sentiment throughout the different populations. Similar sentiment with other varying factor used pertaining to this independent study shown that based on length of employment, respondents also gave lowest average means to both embedded system at an organization level and system connection at a global level. Also, required implementations suggested on par with other tests, with immediate implementations be focused on organization level, follow by team/group level then global and individual level, if necessary on the latter.

Discussion and Recommendations.

Throughout the Independent study, none of the dimensions, individually or averaged cumulatively at any level yielded a “strong” response on either the spectrum. All responses received falls between the ranges between total average means of 1.84 – 5.17, with majority of the responses falls within the ranges of 2.68 to 4.34 reflective of either “mildly disagreeable” and “mildly agreeable” sentiment consideration of moderate sentiment on gauging Learning Organization Status for TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd.

Also, discoveries that despite varying factors used to ascertain the level of Learning Organization for TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd., several consistencies are shown:

- 1) Dimensions that rank the lowest has shown to be either embedded system or system connections.
- 2) Development at an organizational level has shown to be a significance area of concerns based upon perceptions of the tested populations
- 3) Organization has exhibited a positive individual level response, both inquiry and dialogue and continuous learning dimensions.
- 4) The Order to which perceptions are yielded from lowest to highest means are always the same.
 - a. Organizational
 - b. Team/Group
 - c. Global
 - d. Individuals

- 5) Male and Female shares similar overall moderate sentiments, but share concerns regarding to rewards systems pertaining to both individual and team level.
- 6) Department heads does not share the same perspectives to their second in command, potentially can caused a disruption in chain of command.
- 7) Despite varying length of employment, employees have developed an effective horizontal communication infrastructure.

In sum, TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd has effectively encourage an internal environment based on trust, respect and communications, due in part by the size of the operations, and cultural undertone. The many challenges also aid in achieving an approachable corporate environment. However, vertical communications must be improved, so as shared vision amongst all levels to reaffirm objective alignments. Leadership development program must be extended to include assistant department heads to ease the burden of leaderships. Also, a reorganization of reward structure throughout the organization must also be implemented with viable inputs from all members of the organization for an accurate allocation of resources.

References

- Asadi, H., Ghorbani, M. H., & Naderan, M. (2009). The Relationship Between the Learning Organization and Productivity in Iran Physical Education Organization. *World Journal of Sport Sciences*, 2(3), 160–164.
- Dirani, k. M. (2009). Measuring the learning organization culture, organizational commitment and job satisfaction in the Lebanese banking sector. *Human Resource Development International*, 12(2), 189–208.
- Jamali, D., & Yusuf, S. (2009). Learning organizations: diagnosis and measurement in a developing country context The case of Lebanon. *The Learning Organization*, 15(1).
- Marsick, V. J. (2009). Toward a unifying framework to support informal learning theory, research and practice. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 21(4), 265–275.
- Ortenblad, A. (2004a). The learning organization: towards an integrated model. *The Learning Organization*, 11(2), 129–144.
- Ortenblad, A. (2004b). Toward a Contingency Model of How to Choose the Right Type of Learning Organization. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 15(3), 347–350.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. NY: Doubleday Publishers.
- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Vintage.
- Suwannamjo, P. (2011). *Evaluation on Being a Learning Organization*. Chiang Mai: Employees of Chiang Mai Rimdoi Company Limited.

- Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J. (1993). *Sculpting the learning organization Lessons in the art and science of systematic change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J. (1996). *In action: Creating the learning organization*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.
- Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J. (1998). *Dimensions of learning organization (DLOQ) [survey]* Warwick, RI: Partners for the Learning Organization.
- Yang, B., Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J. (2004). The construct of the learning organization: dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 15(1), 31-56.

Tables:

Table 1: Dimensions of Learning Organization Applied in Assessment of Learning Organization for TPK Worldwide Solutions Co., Ltd.	
Dimensions	Definitions
Continuous Learning	The extent of developing learning in organization by learning how to learn new knowledge, values and skills and creating continuous learning opportunities through experiments for personal career development on the Job.
Dialogue & Inquiry	Dialogue is the extent to which culture of organization allows members to have open communication with open minds to talk, discuss, and explain their experiences and skills. Inquiry involves questioning about the views of other yet does not attack the individuals.
Collaboration	The Degree to which an organization tries to design work for organizational members to achieve a unified action on common purposes, have shared vision and personal mastery to exchange their views and ideas and learn how to work collaboratively.
Embedded System	The extent of creating organizational capacity through both high and low technology systems and finding ways to maintain what is learned.
Empowerment	The process of enabling organization members to participate in policy making, to know how to get something done, to assess their needs, to influence others and to create a shared and collective vision. This process continues to get feedback from organization members to recognize the gap between the current status and the new vision.
System Connection	The extent to which an organization has open systems to connect the organization to its external and internal environment to help organization members to see the impact of their work on the entire organization and think worldwide.
Strategic Leadership	Refers to organizational leaders' competence to think strategically, being models, champion, support learning and energize organization to create change, and develop collective vision to help organization members to move in the new direction.