Perceptions of Learning Organization Dimensions among Non-academic Employees of Top Public Universities in Malaysia

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ARTICLE INFO
Article history:
Received 18 September 2016
Accepted 1 January 2017
Available online 16 January 2017

Keywords:
Learning Organization, Organizational learning, Non-academic employees, Public Universities, Malaysia

ABSTRACT
Background: This study explores the practices of the learning organization among non-academic staff in top Malaysian public universities. The paper focuses on three areas of learning organization culture: individual, team, and organizational. Objectives: The current study has four objectives. The first objective is to find out whether the non-academic employees are applying the practices of the learning organization across the three areas of learning. The second objective is to identify which practices of the learning culture are more prominent in top Malaysian Public Universities. The third objective of the study is to find the significant differences regarding the perceptions of learning practices between non-academics’ age levels in top Malaysian Public Universities. The forth objective is to identify the more prominent significant differences regarding the perceptions of learning practices between non-academics’ years of working in the current job in top Malaysian Public Universities. The abbreviated form of (DLOQ) Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire as modified by Yang et al. (1998) was used as the instrument to collect data. 21 variables were applied to assess the perceptions of learning organization culture among the non-academic employees of top Malaysian Public Universities (UM, USM, UPM, UTM and UKM). The population of the research was 2472. A total of 227 (68.6%) respondents returned the questionnaires. Results: The study found that the non-academic employees perceived learning culture existing at individual, team and organizational levels. The results of the comparisons on perceptions towards learning organization practices showed that the more observed prominent differences with regard to the perceptions of collaboration in team learning, and strategic leadership practices based on the levels of working years in the current job and there are no significant differences on the perceptions on learning practices based on the different levels of age. Conclusion: Learning culture provides opportunities to obtain the right knowledge at the right time and in the right location for being competitive in the globalized educational environment. The heads and the deans of the departments should encourage their employees to pass on newly obtained knowledge freely in order to generate a corporate climate of continuous learning in their departments. As knowledge has become the key factor for providing efficient services and achieving higher productivity, the culture of knowledge sharing at the workplace environment essentially enhance team and organizational learning, and eventually leads to desirable organizational success.
INTRODUCTION

The significance of learning was, arguably, first stated by the Chinese philosopher, Confucius (551-479BC). He believed that everyone would and should benefit from learning. Although the concept of learning organization has been talked for almost twenty years and recently was studied by Hayes and Albernathy (1980) in the USA and Pedler et al. (1988) in Britain, the roots of learning organization trace to the 1950s and the 1960s (Johnson, 2012) to the study of Cyert and March (1963) and Cangelosi and Dill (1965). The terms organizational learning and learning organization are sometimes used interchangeably. However, organizational learning is a concept that applied to explain the certain types of activity that take place in the organization while a learning organization refers to the organization itself (Tsang, 1997). Pedler et al. (1991) defined learning organization as “an organization that facilitates the learning of all of its members and continuously transforms itself in order to meet its strategic goals”. And from the integrative approach learning organization defined as “an organization that is characterized by continuous learning for continuous improvement, and by the capacity to transform itself” (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, 1996). The concept of learning organization has been widely applied in organizations particularly those who endeavour for survival in the competitive world (Zare et al., 2010).

Organizations confront unpredictable changes and fluctuating environment which was accelerated by the information age, knowledge economy and technological progression, so the best way for organizations to maintain competitive advantage is getting ready to adapt, change and improve (Kim and Mauborgne, 2005; Joo, 2007). Organizations continuously investigate for new strategies to become sure about the organizational success or survival. The learning organization is the strategy for organizations to adapt to the turbulent change (Pfeffer, 1994, p.17).

In line with the Malaysia’s inclinations for becoming a center of education excellence and competitive institutional education hub of South East Asia, Public Institutions of Higher Education in Malaysia (PIHEs) are now expected that concerning about the matter of lifelong learning as a competitive advantage (Chen et al., 2009). Regarding that, for academic excellence, it is essential for the public institutions to sustain the learning organization culture (Kalsom & Ching, 2012). As through the existence of learning in organizations, the direction of the organizations will be determined from retrieval of valuable information obtained from the best knowledge memory (Lin, 2008). In time of huge changes, turbulent environment, and great reforms, it is essential for knowledge-intensive Universities to utilize forms of learning that make the faculty members able of adapting to the rapidly transforming environmental conditions and to create new knowledge about the managing of the events. The key elements of learning and change process are vital for transforming universities from traditional form into reformed and developmental ones, and for creating opportunities which are necessary for improvement in performance capacity and constant renewal (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000). Regarding Malaysia changing into a knowledge-based economy and meeting the mounting demand for the new skills and knowledge, it is important that Malaysia universities adapt to increasingly competitive environments, nurture learning, and continuously develop the capacities to sustain the lifelong learning among its non-academic staff.

In today’s highly globalized world, the organizations need to adapt to the turbulent change and the universities which are the origin of much knowledge are not an exception. Non-academic staffs in universities are influenced by different internal and external pressures compared with academic staff, such as changing in the information needed by students, as well as providing new services according with the needs of the current knowledge-based society. As public universities are confronting ongoing changes in the information, the updated and knowledgeable Non-academic staff is needed. The non-academic staff must be resourceful and knowledgeable apart from being supportive for the other members of the faculty and the requirements of the students. It is essential that the non-academic staffs continuously learn to employ the existing knowledge for being generative and to create new knowledge in responding to the changing societies needs.

Literature Review:
Studies of Learning Organization in Malaysia Context:

Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996) defined a learning organization as “an organization that is characterized by continuous learning for continuous improvement and by the capacity to transform itself”. Their study introduced a model of learning organization which comprised of four entities. The relationships among the four elements of individuals, teams, organization and its environment lead to a learning organization. The reaction of the three elements to the developments of environment influence the extent to which the organization would be able to learn and extend its capacity to meet the requirements of its customers and its community. They highlighted that the amalgamation of the application of the resources and the energies of the individuals, the teams, the organization and the reactions to its environment generate the learning organization (Sta. Maria, 2002).

A review of the literature revealed that there is scarcity of empirical studies on the concept of learning organization in institutions, specifically in the higher learning institutions in Malaysia context. In this regard it is
good to consider the significant studies. Ahmad and Yunus (2012) conducted a research in three selected organizations from different sectors. Organization A was a service oriented organization, organization B was an economic development and organization C was a research and development organization. The purpose of the study was to indicate how the Malaysian organizations understand the concept of learning organization. The study found that the perceptions and opinions towards the understanding of the concepts of the learning organization were different. The way in which every organization perceives the concepts is based on the nature of each organization and its business orientation. In another survey Sta. Maria and Watkins (2003) studied 628 individuals from eleven government agencies that had been applied a new system for at least a year. The study was undertaken to understand how much individual perceptions of the innovation implementation influenced their learning culture and subsequently its relationship to their use of the innovation. This study in Malaysian public sectors found that although the learning culture of the organization more influence on whether innovation will be applied than what the individual feels about it, ultimately it is the individual organizational context that makes the difference in this relationship.

The other research which was done in Malaysia context was related to exploration of the concept of learning organization from an Islamic perspective (Ahmad, 2013). Two Islamic organizations were investigated. The findings showed that some of the elements which Islamic management principles practiced those are consistent with the concept of learning organization. Bodaghi khajeh Noubar et al. (2011) conducted a research in 400 Malaysian companies listed in Bursa Malaysia and acquired a sample of 218 companies. Findings of the research provided empirical evidence that supports the concept of the learning organization and the positive influence on knowledge and financial performance. The findings concluded that organizations with supportive learning culture and having the dedicated leaders are able to grow in their financial and knowledge performance.

Few important studies were done in the context of higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Ali (2012) carried a study on academic staff’s perceptions of the characteristics of a learning organization within International Islamic University Malaysia. The study also investigated the relationship between the characteristics of a learning organization and satisfaction with performance in teaching and research activities. The questionnaires distributed among 400 academicians and 214 questionnaires were gathered. The results indicated that the academic staff had moderate levels of the characteristics of a learning organization and satisfaction with performance. The results also showed that there were positive and significant relationships between dimensions of learning organization and satisfaction with performance in teaching and research activities. Moreover, dimensions of the learning organization accounted for small but significant variance of satisfaction with both teaching and research performance activities.

The study of Norliya and Azizah (2005a) investigated the conceptions of 250 public and private universities ‘librarians in Klang Valley of Malaysia to find out whether academic librarians were practicing the learning organization concepts in team level or not. The result of the study found that librarians perceived learning practices at the team level does exist in general but they were not overly convinced of the extent to which the practices exist. The result of the statistics also showed that the senior level librarians had more positive perceptions on the practices of team level learning in their organizations than the middle level librarians.

Another research in higher education context was done by Kumar and Idris (2006). Their study investigated the relationships between the learning organization dimensions, institutional characteristics (age of the institution, number of full time employees, perceived level of institutional commitment to research, productivity, effective teaching and learning, institutional service, and community service) and perceived changes in knowledge performance within private higher learning institutions in Malaysia. The researchers sought managers’ responses to the dimensions of learning organization with perceived measures of private higher learning institutions’ knowledge performance to determine the relationships. The research discovered that there were positive, medium to high and significant relationships between the seven dimensions of the learning organization and the dependent variable, perceived changes in knowledge performance. The three dimensions that demonstrated strong relationships were team learning, embedded systems and provision leadership. The institutional characteristics that jointly affect the private higher learning institutions’ performance were perceived level of institutional commitment to institutional service and institutional level of commitment to effective teaching and learning.

Significance of the Study:

The current study provides empirical evidence for human resource (HR) managers and heads of faculties. Such information can be significantly important for HR managers as well as heads of faculties, since it indicates how the learning organization dimensions are being exhibited in public universities and highlights the preservation of the learning culture as their essential task. The survival of today’s Public Institutions of Higher Education (PIHE) relies on how these organizations accept changes, improve practices and expand competitiveness. Learning organization facilitates learning of all its members and possesses specific characteristics to meet the ever-changing needs of the environment.
**Research Objectives:**
This study is carried out:
1. To identify the non-academic employees’ perceptions on the practices of learning culture in the top public universities of Malaysia.
2. To identify which practices of learning culture are more prominent in the top public universities of Malaysia.
3. To find the significant differences regarding the perceptions of learning practices between non-academics ‘age levels in the top public universities of Malaysia.
4. To find the more prominent significant difference regarding the perceptions of learning practices between non-academics’ years of working in the current job in the top public universities of Malaysia.

**Hypotheses:**
The following two hypotheses are presented in this study:

**H1:** There are no significant differences on the perceptions on learning culture practices at all levels between non-academics’ age levels in the top public universities of Malaysia.

**H2:** There are no significant differences on the perceptions on learning culture practices at all levels between non-academics’ years of working in the current job in the top public universities of Malaysia.

**Research Method:**
This study applied the survey method using questionnaire as the instrument. The instrument was the abbreviated form of “Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ)” which introduced by Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996) and modified by Yang (Watkins et al., 1997; Yang et al., 2004; Yang, 2003; Watkins and Marsick, 2003). The reliability and validity of the instrument were confirmed in different studies (Zhang et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2007). The questionnaire comprised of 21 variables on levels of learning practices. A five-point interval scale where 1 was marked “Almost never” and 5 was marked “Almost always” was used to measure the scale. In responding to the questions on the levels of learning practices, respondents were asked to determine the degree to which the statement “is” or “is not” true of their university.

The pilot test was conducted to find the reliability of the questionnaire through submitting to 30 experts in three of the mentioned universities. The result of the reliability for pilot study showed that Cronbach’s Alpha reliability Coefficient exceeded 0.88 for the variables of learning practices, which indicated that this instrument is a reliable measure. Returned questionnaires were n=227, and the response rate was 68.6%. The actual respondents of this research were selected among non-academic staff of 5 top public universities (UM, UPM, UTM, UKM, USM) in Malaysia. These universities were selected as samples because of two reasons; first their significant role of sharing knowledge as universities regarding the requirements of the society cannot be ignored, and second is the paucity of researches in the context of higher learning institution particularly in top public universities in Malaysia.

**Respondents Profile:**
From the total of 227 non-academic staff, 73% (166) were female and 27% (61) were male; the population of female was more than men. More than 4% (11) of the respondents were between 20-25 ages; more than 37% (86) of the respondents were between 26-32 ages; more than 27% (63) of the respondents were between 33-42 ages; 28% (64) of the respondents have more than 42 years old. The results showed the majority of the respondents were between 26-32 ages. SPM certification holders represented the highest percentage of the respondents at 41% (96), followed by those who hold diploma-STPM at 32% (75). Those who hold degree and graduate degree followed at 16% (37), and 7% (17) respectively. The respondents with LCE certification represented the lowest percentage by only 1% (2). When respondents were evaluated on the basis of their current working experience, 14% (32) had three years working experience; 48% (111) of the non-academic staff had the most years of working experience in the current university between four to ten years; 17% (41) had working experience between 11 to 20 years, and 20% (46) of non-academic staff had more than 20 years of working experience.

**Data Analysis:**
The descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for analyzing the data. Research questions one and two were analyzed by descriptive statistic through using mean score. Choosing which statistical test must be applied for questions three and four was related to the normality of the test. The study of the data indicated that the data was not normally distributed. Therefore for questions number three and four the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. The data collected was statistically analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceptions on all Levels of learning Practices:
The Twenty-one variables based on the abbreviated form of DLOQ reflected the perceptions of the respondents about learning practices of all levels. In this study, the variables in the questionnaire are based on a 1-5 low-high scale with a score of 3.0 donated “neutral”. Therefore, when the respondents marked 3 or more (3 to 5) in the scale, then that indicates their universities could be considered as practicing the learning culture. The mean scores of the perceptions are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Respondents on Learning Practices at All Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Positive Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my University, people help each other learn.</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, people are given time to support learning.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, people are rewarded for learning.</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, people give open and honest feedback to each other.</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, people spend time building trust with each other.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, teams/groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed.</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, teams/groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or information collected.</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My university makes its lessons learned available to all employees.</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University measures the results of the time and resources spent on training.</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University recognizes people for taking initiative.</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University supports employees who take calculated risks.</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University encourages people to think from a global perspective.</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University, encourages people to get answers from across the organization when solving problems.</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, leaders mentor and coach those they lead.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, heads continually look for opportunities to learn.</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my University, heads ensure the University’s actions are consistent with its values.</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the statements</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>65.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores range from 3.15 (My university supports employees who take calculated risks) to 4.00 (My university creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance). The overall mean score of the variables is 3.75. Since all variables have a mean score greater than midpoint (mean= 3.0), it can be concluded that these public universities practice the learning organization culture. The responses affirmed the existence of learning practices at all levels. Therefore, the public universities are to be considered as learning organizations where all the members of the organization cooperate together to learn and reinforce knowledge.

There are three statement measures with mean scores closer to “neutral/not sure”. Those are: ‘My university supports employees who take calculated risks’ (3.15); ‘In my University, people are given time to support learning’ (3.42); ‘In my University, people spend time building trust with each other’ (3.43). The highest mean scores are listed in the descending order: ‘My University creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance (4.0)’; ‘In my University, people give open, and honest feedback to each other (3.99)’; ‘My University measures the results of the time and resources spent on training (3.92)’; and ‘In my University, heads ensure the University’s actions are consistent with its values (3.92)’. So the results showed that except four variables, the rest of the 17 items which comprise 80.96% had mean scores between 3.56 (My University, gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work) to 4.00 (My University creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance). From the results tabulated under Table 1 it can be inferred that one item (4.76%) of all the 21 items had the lowest mean score: ‘My University supports employees who take calculated risk’ (3.15). Based on the mean score results and due to the reason that the public universities are considered nonprofit organizations, which do not primarily aim at profit generation, these organizations don’t concern about deploying the staff who take risks in the work procedure. As a matter of fact, the entity of their work doesn’t require risk in their work environment.

This study emphasized the importance of being concerned with learning practices at all levels of the organization to sustain in the changing environment. This research is in line with the study by Norliya and Azizah (2007b) which stated that the top management should realize that encouraging learning culture through making learning intentional at all times and in all levels is essential for the librarians of the universities.
Significant Differences in Perception of Learning Practices by Age:

**H1:** There are no significant differences on the perceptions on learning culture practices at all levels between non-academics’ age levels in the top public universities of Malaysia.

In order to determine which practices show the significant differences between different levels of age, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was used. The results of the statistical tests are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

From the Kruskal-Wallis Test results, there were no significant differences in all the learning organization practices regarding the mean rank scores and \( P \)-values between different age levels. Since there are no large statistically significant differences in learning organization practices between different age levels, therefore the hypothesis, ‘there are no significant differences on the perceptions on learning culture practices at all levels between non-academics’ age levels’ is supported.

Table 2: The Kruskal-Wallis Test results on Perceptions of Learning Organization Practices between Different Levels of Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank LO1CL</th>
<th>Mean Rank LO2ID</th>
<th>Mean Rank LO3CT</th>
<th>Mean Rank LO4ST</th>
<th>Mean Rank LO5EM</th>
<th>Mean Rank LO6C</th>
<th>Mean Rank LO7SL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>126.59</td>
<td>109.09</td>
<td>115.68</td>
<td>129.36</td>
<td>120.91</td>
<td>111.00</td>
<td>119.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-32</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>104.36</td>
<td>110.79</td>
<td>107.75</td>
<td>110.67</td>
<td>103.67</td>
<td>114.39</td>
<td>107.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-42</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>115.13</td>
<td>120.98</td>
<td>123.23</td>
<td>113.76</td>
<td>116.83</td>
<td>115.23</td>
<td>115.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>123.78</td>
<td>112.11</td>
<td>112.84</td>
<td>116.13</td>
<td>123.98</td>
<td>112.73</td>
<td>120.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>than 42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Learning organization practices (dimensions): LO1CL: Create Continuous Learning; LO2ID: Promote Inquiry and Dialog; LO3CT: Encouraging Collaboration and Team Learning; LO4ST: System to Capture and Share Learning; LO5EM: Empowerment; LO6C: Connect the Organization to the Environment; LO7SL: Provide Strategic Leadership for Learning.

Table 3: Test Statistics\(^{a,b}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LO1CL</th>
<th>LO2ID</th>
<th>LO3CT</th>
<th>LO4ST</th>
<th>LO5EM</th>
<th>LO6C</th>
<th>LO7SL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square df</td>
<td>3.880</td>
<td>1.140</td>
<td>2.470</td>
<td>1.132</td>
<td>4.043</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>.767</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.769</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{a}\)Kruskal-Wallis Test
\(^{b}\)Grouping Variable: AGE

Prominent Differences in Perceptions of Learning Practices by Years of Working in the Current Job:

**H2:** There are no significant differences on the perceptions on learning culture practices at all levels between non-academics’ years of working in the current job in the top public universities of Malaysia.

In order to determine which practices show the more prominent significant differences between different levels of working years in the current job, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was used. The results of the statistical tests are presented in Tables 4, 5 and Tables 6, 7.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test shows that the more prominent statistically significant differences were observed in collaboration in team learning and strategic leadership as learning organization practices between the different levels of working years in the current job. There is a large statistically significant difference in collaboration in team learning as learning organization practice between the different levels of working years in the current job. The differences are statistically significant at the 5% level (\( P \)-value < 0.05). So \( \chi^2 \) (3) =15.059, \( P=0.002 \) with a mean rank collaboration in team learning of 121.66 for three years of working in the current job, 101.29 for working years between four to ten, followed by 143.81 for working years between 11 to 20, and 113.12 for more than 20 years of working in the current job.

Table 4: The Kruskal-Wallis Test results on Perceptions of collaboration in team learning Practice and between Different Levels of working years in the current job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Years in the Current Job</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LO3CT: Three years</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>121.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between four to ten years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>101.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between eleven to twenty</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>143.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than twenty years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>113.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LO3CT: Encouraging Collaboration and Team Learning
The results of Kruskal-Wallis Test shows that the other prominent statistically significant differences found in strategic leadership as learning organization practice between the different levels of working years in the current job. There is a large statistically significant difference in strategic leadership as learning organization practice between the different levels of working years in the current job. These differences are statistically significant at the 5% level (P-value < 0.05). So $\chi^2(3) = 11.960$, P= 0.008 with a mean rank strategic leadership of 123.77 for three years of working in the current job, 101.85 for working years between four to ten, 134.44 for working years between 11 to 20, and 118.59 for more than 20 years of working in the current job.

### Table 5: Test Statistics\textsuperscript{a,b}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LO3CT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>15.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a. Kruskal Wallis Test
* b. Grouping Variable: How many years you are working in the current job

### Table 6: The Kruskal-Wallis Test results on Perceptions of strategic leadership Practice and between Different Levels of working years in the current Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Years in the Current Job</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LO7SL Three years</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>123.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between four to ten years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>101.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between eleven to twenty</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>134.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than twenty years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>118.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LO7SL: Provide Strategic Leadership for Learning

### Table 7: Test Statistics\textsuperscript{a,b}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LO7SL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>11.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a. Kruskal Wallis Test
* b. Grouping Variable: How many years you are working in the current job

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Perceptions on the Learning Culture Practices at all Levels:**

The survey method was deployed in this research. For survey questionnaire, the respondents were asked to rate a scale from one to five in which ‘1’ represented ‘almost never’ and ‘5’ represented ‘almost always’. Therefore, a score of ‘3’ is interpreted as ‘neutral’. This study suggests that the overall mean score of 3.0 or above is an indication that the non-academic employees practice learning culture in their universities. The results in Table 1 indicated that about 4.76% of all the 21 items had the lowest mean score: ‘My University supports employees who take calculated risk’ (3.15), while the highest mean scores were obtained for: ‘My University creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance’ (4.00); ‘In my University, people give open, and honest feedback to each other’ (3.99); ‘My University measures the results of the time and resources spent on training’ (3.92); and ‘In my university, heads ensure the university’s actions are consistent with its values’ (3.92), respectively.

The results of the current study contradict with studies (Wang et al., 2007; Wang, 2005; Nazari and Pihie, 2012; Pimapunsri, 2008) which mentioned that there are differences in perceptions of learning organization dimensions and the current research is consistent with Lim’s (2010), and Thakur & Chaudhuri’s (2015) studies in which indicate no differences in perceptions of learning organization dimensions by non-academics’ age levels. The results of the comparisons on perceptions towards learning organization practices indicate that the more observed prominent differences with regard to the perceptions of collaboration in team learning, and strategic leadership practices based on the levels of working years in the current job. The results of the current study are in alignment with the study conducted by Thakur and Chaudhuri (2015) which showed the differences regarding learning organization practices based on the different levels of working years in the current job.

The current study results is in line with Sta. Maria’s (2003) study which indicated that learning culture is a prerequisite for successful learning organizations. Further, the results of the current study confirm Ali’s (2012) study that advised the deans of the colleges and the heads of the departments in universities strive to generate clear characteristics of learning organizations. The study results of Dymock and McCarthy (2006) which showed that the variables related to empowerment had the lowest mean score supports the study results. The current study results indicate that the lowest mean score is related to employees who take risks, which shows
Apparently that the public universities are entities which do not concern about risky initiatives as they are non-profit organizations.

Learning organization is an organizational model proposing to build a culture of adaption to change (Senge, 1990; Watkins and Marsick, 1993, 1996). Malaysian society has been revolutionized. The level of education in a large proportion of the population got already increased and quality of Malaysians life has been improved. In order to meet the demand of new economy climate, the national mission aimed to concern about the nation’s global competitiveness, human capital development, national integration, distribution of income, and the quality of life. For achieving aforementioned aims, Malaysian companies and universities need to achieve better performance and play an unprecedented role toward promoting learning culture (Boudaghi Khajeh Noubar et al., 2011).

Conclusion:

For sustaining the learning culture, the non-academic employees should also be rewarded for their initiatives. Rewarding those employees who learn, is an important aspect of learning organizations. It acts as a tool that encourages employees to contribute whether directly or indirectly to the process of sustaining learning organization culture. Therefore, the heads of the faculties must identify as many ways as possible to reward individuals, and teams in either financial or non-financial function. The outputs of rewards facilitated to individuals and teams that learn, can be seen through improved services and relationships, as well as determined knowledge acquired, created, stored and transferred by the individuals and groups.

Malaysian Public Universities cannot be successful without meeting environmental demands. The findings of the current study indicate that in Public Universities, paying attention to continuous learning along with collaborative learning across the organization are essential for continuous growth in Public Universities. The findings of the current study indicate that accessing updated systems to capture and share learning (embedded system) has significant effect on retaining the learning organization culture. The findings of the current study indicate that in higher education institutions, paying attention to learning organization dimensions is an essential task for enabling the non-academic members to provide high quality services for the students as its customers.

To conclude, as knowledge is applied in Public Higher Education Insinuations, learning culture provides opportunities to obtain the right knowledge at the right time and in the right location for being competitive in the globalized educational environment. Norliya and Azizah’s (2007b) study which stated that the library management in universities should motivate their employees is in line with the current research that indicates the heads and the deans of the departments should encourage their employees to pass on newly obtained knowledge freely in order to generate a corporate climate of continues learning in their departments. As knowledge has become the key factor for providing efficient services and achieving higher productivity, the culture of knowledge sharing at the workplace environment essentially enhance team and organizational learning, and eventually leads to desirable organizational success.

Contributions:

The current study provides useful information for HR managers, trainers and scholars in the field of organization development. This study contributes to HRD through strengthening our understanding on how people in organizations should be concerned about the significance of learning organization culture. This research has expanded the existing studies on Public Universities in Malaysian context, as it presents more empirical evidence on how the learning organization dimensions are being exhibited in public Universities’ culture on a national scale. Since the notion of learning organization seems to be in its early stages in Malaysia, specifically in higher education context, this research contributes to research on learning organization issues in Malaysia, and in general in Asia. As this study focuses on the Public Universities in higher education context, the empirical findings of the current study is helpful for other researchers who their studies are related to the other types of higher education institutions.

Recommendations for the future research:

Some of the recommendations for learning organization researchers are as follows: Future researchers are encouraged to perform this study in other higher learning institutions, such as other public universities, and university colleges to explore the perceptions of learning organization dimensions among their non-academic employees.

As the scope of this research was administrative staff, not support and academic staff, adding these samples to the scope of the research, may change the responses towards items in the DLOQ. So it is suggested that the future researchers implement the studies with consideration of this matter.

Research such as this, reflects the fact that the applicability of learning organization concept has begun to grow, therefore additional studies in cultural and international contexts are needed.
REFERENCES


