Chapter 54

The Roles of E-Learning, Organizational Learning, and Knowledge Management in the Learning Organizations

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the roles of e-learning, organizational learning, and knowledge management (KM) in the learning organizations, thus describing the practical and theoretical concepts of learning organization, e-learning, organizational learning, and KM; and the significance of e-learning, organizational learning, and KM in the learning organizations. The utilization of e-learning, organizational learning, and KM leads to the improved organizational success in the growing knowledge economy. The appropriateness of e-learning, organizational learning, and KM is influential for the learning organizations to serve practitioners and researchers, increase business performance, sustain competitiveness, and fulfill expected accomplishment in the learning organizations. The chapter argues that promoting e-learning, organizational learning, and KM has the potential to increase organizational performance and achieve strategic goals in the learning organizations.

INTRODUCTION

E-learning gains the increasing attention as it imparts knowledge on a global basis with sub-stantially reduced costs (de Brito Neto, Smith, & Pedersen, 2014). E-learning research has shifted from issues of the effectiveness of e-learning to teaching and learning practices (Hung, 2012). The quality of e-learning can be recognized in many different ways, reflecting several stakeholders and the complexity of the systems and processes used in higher education (Marshall, 2012). In the global economy, managing knowledge is effectively critical to the competitive power of modern organizations (Park, Lee, Lee, Jiayi, & Yu, 2013). KM has attracted an increasing number of researchers (Li, Guo, Zhi, Han, & Liu, 2013). KM becomes a key organizational capability for creating competitive advantage (Kale & Karaman, 2012).

Learning is an essential element of all forms of higher education work (Neumann & Bolitzer, 2014). Institutional leaders can exploit organizational learning strategies to learn what works to promote community learning outcomes and student success in global education (Moore & Mendez, 2014). Ugurluoglu et al. (2013) stated that organizational learning is the procedure of increasing effective organizational movements through knowledge and understanding. Organizational learning is necessary in rapidly changing environments, through seeking new knowledge and the practical use of existing knowledge (Dayaram & Fung, 2014).

Learning organization arranges KM as it involves shaping what has been learned into the foundations of an effective organization (Karkoulian, Messarra, & McCarthy, 2013). KM possesses an organizational structure that coincidently corresponds with the notion of the idealized learning organization (Firestone & McElroy, 2004). One of the most important aspects of KM is to create a system that is capable of providing mechanisms and methodologies allowing the right knowledge to be at the right place and at the right person as well as at the right time within an enterprise (Oztemel & Arslankaya, 2012).

BACKGROUND

E-learning is rapidly increasing and has become one of the key e-commerce applications with a growing commercial market in the near future (Sun & Wang, 2011). With the support of the Internet, many organizations and schools have adopted the idea of applying the e-learning system, which is considered as one of the most important services provided by the Internet (Marković & Jovanović, 2012). E-learning technologies provide a virtual classroom environment on the Web toward supporting teacher-student and student-student communications, course material distribution, as well as online student assessments (Lau, Yen, Li, & Wah, 2014).

In the last two decades, the concept of organizational learning grew in academic publications as itself (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2003), and as a process of KM (Dingsoyr, Bjornson, & Shull, 2009). Increasing attention is paid to organizational learning, with the success of contemporary organizations strongly contingent on their ability to learn and grow (Za, Spagnoletti, & North-Samardzic, 2014). Organizational learning is an important determinant of organizational innovation in technological colleges (Hsiao, Chang, & Chen, 2014).

KM has been used by a large number of research disciplines (Ackerman, Dachtera, Pipek, & Wulf, 2013). Knowledge is bound to individual or collective actions (Ozel, 2012). Knowledge-based approaches to the organization offer the valuable insights into some of the central issues of governance and organizational design (Grant, 2013). KM has become increasingly significant in global business (Liu & Abdalla, 2013). Managing knowledge constitutes one of the major strategic advantages of an organization (Lunnan & Zhao, 2014).

ROLES OF E-LEARNING, ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

This section describes the practical and theoretical concepts of learning organization, e-learning, organizational learning, and KM; and the significance of e-learning, organizational learning, and KM in the learning organizations.

Concept of Learning Organization

Learning organization is recognized as an organization that promotes the learning of all its organizational members and consistently transforms itself in order to meet its strategic objectives (Pedlar, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1991). Learning organization involves the five major disciplines:

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