



Evaluation of Learning Organization Components at Kabul University from the Viewpoint of Faculty Members and Students

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 21 October 2019 Revised: 22 January 2020 Accepted: 17 April 2020 Online: 27 April 2020	The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the components of learning organization at Kabul University from perspective of faculty members and students. This research is applied in terms of purpose and is a survey research. Stratified Random Sampling Method was used and 350 faculty members and students were selected based on Cochran formula. Peter Singe's questionnaire was used to collect data. The research findings showed that the level of realization of the components of the learning organization in the Kabul University was moderate. At the same time, given the ranking of indicators, attention to the components of "shared vision" and "team learning" is a higher than "mental pattern", "systematic thinking" and "personal mastery". Overall, the research findings highlight the need for the university's planners and administrators to pay more attention to the characteristics of learning organizations.
KEYWORDS Learning Organization Organizational Learning Students Faculty Kabul Afghanistan	

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1. Introduction

Afghanistan has been plagued by war and political strife for the past half-century. These conflicts have had many negative consequences for Afghan society and its social institutions. Baiza (2013) emphasizes that war and insecurity in Afghanistan and political instability have been important challenges for the Afghan education system. Higher education institutions in Afghanistan are more than 40 years old. But in the meantime, it has experienced many ups and downs. The Russian occupation of Afghanistan in the late 1970s, followed by the outbreak of civil war in the 1980s, completely destroyed the foundation of the country's education system. During the Taliban's rule, the situation worsened and even girls were deprived of education. After the US-led invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of political stability, the state of the education system is slowly recovering, although more than 60% of Afghans are still illiterate (Fouladi, 2007). In this situation, the need for manpower and its training is one of the most important priorities of the Afghan society. Today, more than ever, the country needs educated young people to repair economic damage, improve health indicators, and increase social participation. Accordingly, the reconstruction of the education system, as well as higher education, has become one of the priorities of Afghan government officials and politicians.

As World Bank (2013) reported the Government of Afghanistan is aware that higher education can produce a wide and varied range of economic and social benefits, and places great emphasis on the development of the higher education sector. The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) had a National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP): 2010-2014. In this regard, the quantitative development of universities and schools, the establishment of new universities and the increase in the number of professors and students have been of interest to Afghan governments over the past 15 years. Per the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and the Afghan Central Statistics Organization, public university enrollments rose from 7,800 in 2001 to 174,425 in 2015 (WES Staff, 2016). But on the other hand, according to the World Bank report (2013) higher education enrollment in Afghanistan is one of the lowest in the world. The higher education gross enrollment ratio (GER) is about 5 percent. This is one of the lowest higher education participation rates world-wide. Among countries comparable to Afghanistan, in terms of income per capita and/or their geographical locations close to Afghanistan, only three countries, Burundi, Chad and Eritrea have

lower higher education enrollment rates. Countries with per capita incomes closest to Afghanistan, such as Guinea, Rwanda and Togo, have higher gross enrollment rates (p.E2).

At the same time, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Higher Education in 2012, there are 3496 faculty members in 29 public universities across the country. The degree of people with a doctorate degree is close to 5%, the members with a master's degree are 36% and the people with a bachelor's degree are 59%. Female faculty members make up only 14 percent. In addition, out of a total of 3496 faculty members of public universities, 1374 perform their duties in 4 public universities in Kabul (Kabul University, University of Medicine, Polytechnic and Shahid Rabbani University of Education). From Ebrahimi's (2014) perspective, in a country like Afghanistan where literacy is low, higher education is chosen by many young people to look for work and a better future as a quick and safe way to get a job and earn a higher income. But the challenges of the higher education system such as lack of academic ability of faculty members, shortage of libraries, research facilities and budgets, inappropriate educational space, and absence of a reputable scientific journal, have made the situation more difficult. At the same time, it is important to note that Afghanistan's higher education system is one of the most centralized systems in the world. This centralization allows for the implementation of standard policies and procedures, but weakens the authority and innovation of presidents and professors in the universities (Tirney, 2005). Kabul University, the first higher education institution in Afghanistan, was established in 1964. In the years before the war, Kabul University had academic relations with some European universities. Works published at Kabul University in those years show that higher education in Afghanistan was not far from that of the region's universities. It should be noted that Kabul University is the largest and oldest higher education institution in Afghanistan and its main mission is to enable the youth of Afghanistan, both men and women (Kabul University, 2020).

It is obvious that attention to growth and promotion of educational institutions is an inevitable necessity. In fact, it should be emphasized that in a world full of rapid changes in the 21st century, only institutions can maintain and ensure their survival and dynamism to have a correct and responsible understanding of this complex world (Fatehi and Rahimian, 2015). Acknowledging the rapid developments, Khamis (2012) emphasizes that the survival of organizations depends on how and to what extent they have embraced change and increased their competitiveness. Obviously, this depends on the ability of organizations to learn (Theron, 2002). The concept of the learning organization from Senge's point of view (1990) is an organization that continuously changes and

performs its function by using individuals, values and other subsystems and relying on the lessons and experiences that it obtains. In other words, a learning organization is typically an organization in which individuals are constantly growing and developing their existential capacities and let them learn from what happened (Senge, 2007). Serrat (2009) argues that a learning organization emphasizes the pivotal role that learning can play in achieving organizational effectiveness. Robbins (2007) argues that the learning organization represents an organization that continually develops its capacity to change and adapt to new conditions. Garvin et al. (2008) believe that the learning organization requires a specific type of organizational culture that requires tolerance and holistic thinking, in which employees of the organization are prepared to deal with unpredictable situations.

Also, reflecting on the views of different management experts shows that each of them has different characteristics for the learning organization. The leading expert in this field, Senge, mentions personal mastery, mental patterns, shared vision, team learning and systematic thinking as the most important components of the learning organization (Senge, 1996). From Gephart and Marsick's (1996) perspective, the learning organization has six main characteristics: continuous learning at the system level, knowledge production and participation, systematic and critical thinking, flexibility and empiricism, employee-centered and learning culture. Marquardt (2002) also introduces dynamic learning, empowerment, organizational transformation, knowledge management, and technology application as subsystems that interact with each other to form the learner's organization. From Jeffrey's (2015) perspective, in times of extreme change, universities need to consider the needs of the learning organization. Perlipcean and Bejinaru (2016) emphasize that universities have a fundamental responsibility to adopt and perform functions related to a learning organization. Schein (1996) also states that in today's world, it is these higher education centers that make it possible to acquire knowledge and the process of learning and disseminating information quickly. In his research, Chiu (2000) introduces the tendency to learn as the main stimulus and philosophy of change and transformation in universities. Chang and Lee's (2003) study showed that there was a significant difference between schools that had relatively stable conditions and schools that were constantly looking for new conditions for their activities. Research by Reece (2004) showed that in order for universities to become a learning organization, capabilities such as leadership, insight, innovation, information and communication technology, organizational culture, human resource management, and sufficient resources are needed. Park and Rojewski (2006) reported in their study that it is possible to implement and implement the

elements of the Senge Learning Organization model equally among South Korean high schools. Research and Chi (2010) found that without organizational learning, no organization can maintain and expand its knowledge management practices. The findings of Negok and Huy (2016) also showed that the process of organizational learning in universities is influenced by the level of employee participation in decisions and significantly affects the performance of the university.

In Iran - a country where the lead researcher is currently studying at one of its universities - researchers' attention to the importance of learning universities has also grown exponentially. Comparing the level of ownership of the University of Tehran and the University of Tabriz, Bajani (2007) reported on the characteristics of the learning organization that both universities are far from reaching the desired situation. Esfijani et al. (2012) showed that the current situation of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz is significantly different from the desirable indicators of the learning organization. Sattari Ghahfarkhi and Abzari (2012) in the field of creating a learning organization based on the Marquardt model in Shahrod University of Medical Sciences, pointed out the need for more attention to the establishment of subsystems of the learning organization and balanced development of these subsystems. A study by Khajehei et al. (2014) at Zanzan University of Medical Sciences found that the university was not at the desired level in terms of components such as individual competencies, mental models, common perspective, team learning and systematic thinking. Hajizadeh and Hosseinpour (2016) by examining the application of the components of the learning organization and its relationship with knowledge management in the staff and managers of Ahwaz University of Medical Sciences have reported that the five components of the learning organization have been below average. Emphasizing on the essential role of the learning organization, this paper examines the characteristics and components of such a structure in Kabul University (Afghanistan) in order to provide a clear picture of the current situation and conditions of the university in the field of education and culture. At the same time, provide the necessary mental and practical context for some of the necessary changes and reforms at this university as one of the most important higher education centers in Afghanistan.

2. Research Method

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and survey research in terms of method. The statistical population included all faculty members and students of Kabul University in the academic year of 2018-2019, with 13642 people. The sampling method was stratified random

sampling and the sample size was estimated at 350 people based on Cochran's formula. The highest percentage of the sample belonged to faculty members and male students with 225 people (64.3%) and the lowest percentage belonged to female faculty members and students with 125 students (35.7%). A study questionnaire from Peter Senge's Learning Organization (1990) was used to collect data. Content validity was used to measure the validity of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the measuring instrument, which was significant at 0.80. SPSS23 statistical software was used to analyze the data.

3. Results

In this study, 250 respondents were students (71.4) and 100 (28.6) were faculty members. In terms of gender, 65.1% of respondents were male and 34.9% are female. In this part of the research, the status of the components of the learning organization from the perspective of faculty members and students has been described.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Learning Organization Components

Main variables	High		Medium		Low	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Personal Mastery	91	26	219	62/6	40	11/4
Mental Patterns	121	34/6	187	53/4	42	12
Shared Vision	43	12/3	215	61/4	93	26/3
Team Learning	51	14/6	203	58	96	27/4
Systematic Thinking	82	23/4	213	60/9	55	15/7

The table above shows that the component of personal mastery among 26% of the sample studied is high, 62.6% is moderate and 11.4% is low. The rate of mental learning pattern is estimated to be 34.6% of the studied sample at high level, 53.4% at medium level and 12% at low level. The shared vision rate is estimated to be 12.1% of the study sample at a high level, 61.4% at the average level, and 26.2% at the low level. The team learning rate is estimated at 14.6% of the study sample at a high level, 58% at a moderate level and 27.4% at a low level. In this study, the

rate of systematic thinking among 23.2% of the studied sample was estimated to be high, 60.9% was moderate and 15.7% was low. The results of the research indicate that the evaluation of the respondents from the components of the learning organization in Kabul University is not in the desired level and is in the middle and lower level.

Inferential Results

A: Components of the learning organization in terms of students according to the faculty

The results showed that there is a significant difference between the components of the learning organization in terms of students in their colleges. The value of the F test (3.905) and its significance level (0.000) also indicate this fact. In this regard, the Faculty of Physics with an average of 3.614, the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences with an average of 3.474, the Faculty of Literature with an average (3.507) and the Faculty of Religious Sciences with an average of 3.343, the Faculty of Law and Political Science With an average of 3.329, the Faculty of Economics with an average of 3.231, the Faculty of Engineering with an average of 3.191 and the Faculty of Science with an average of 3.270 have been moderate but the Faculty of Biology with an average of 2.468, the Faculty of Communication and Journalism with an average of 2/489 and the Faculty of Computer Science with an average of 2.669 in the components of the learning organization have been low.

B: Comparison of the realization of the components of the learning organization according to the gender of the students

Table 2: Components of the learning organization in terms of student gender

Respondents	number	mean	standard deviation	df	t	sig
Men	153	2/826	0/740	98	0/545	0/060
Women	97	2/913	0/536			

The value of the t-test (0.545) and its significance level (0.060) indicate that, in general, there is no significant difference between the views of male and female students on the realization of the

components of the learning organization in Kabul University. In this test, the average view of men was 2.826 and women were 2.913. Therefore, Kabul University has not been very successful in terms of fulfilling the components of the learning organization in terms of both groups of male and female students.

C. Comparison of the realization of the components of the learning organization according to the gender of the faculty members

Table 3: The level of realization of the components of the learning organization according to the gender of the faculty members

Respondents	number	mean	standard deviation	df	t	sig
Men	75	3/177	0/626	248	- 0/822	0/647
Women	25	2/942	0/657			

According to the data in Table 3 the amount of t-test and its significance level show that there is no significant difference between the views of male and female faculty members on the realization of the components of the learning organization in Kabul University.

D. The level of realization of the components of the learning organization from the viewpoints of faculty members and students

Table 4: The level of realization of the components of the learning organization from viewpoints of faculty members and students

Main variables	Average scores of professors	Average scores of students
Personal Mastery	2/8	3/6
Mental patterns	3	3/2
Shared vision	2/8	3/03
Team Learning	2/8	3/01
Systematic Thinking	3	3/23

The single-sample t-test showed that, from the perspective of faculty members and students surveyed, Kabul University has an average personal mastery. In fact, the level of fulfillment of personal mastery in the eyes of students and professors means that students have a more positive view of the realization of this element in the university than professors. According to the professors and students surveyed, Kabul University has average mental patterns. However, a different level of belief in the realization of mental patterns among students with an average of 3.2 and professors with an average of 3 means that students have a more positive view of the realization of mental patterns at Kabul University than professors. The single-sample t-test showed that from the point of view of professors and students, Kabul University has average shared vision. However, the level of realization of the shared vision in terms of students with an average of 3.03 and professors with an average of 2.8, means that students have a more positive view of the realization to this element at Kabul University than professors. From the viewpoints of the professors and students, Kabul University has, on average, two characteristics of team learning and systematic thinking. However, students have a more positive view of the realization of these two characteristics than professors.

E. Comparing the level of realization of the components of the learning organization from the viewpoints of faculty members and students

Table 5: The level of realization of the components of the learning organization from the perspective of faculty members and students

Respondents	number	mean	standard deviation	df	t	sig
Students	250	3/086	0/647	348	3/046	0/369
Faculty Members	100	2/848	0/693			

The value of t-test (3.046) and its significance level (0.369) showed that there is no significant difference between the views of faculty members and students on the realization of the components of the learning organization in Kabul University. In this test, the average view of students was 3.086 and faculty members were 2.848. Given the significant level of averages, both professors and students believe that the components of the learning organization have not been realized at Kabul University, and the administrators of this university have not been very successful in realizing the components of the learning organization.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that from the point of view of faculty members and students under study, Kabul University has an average level of personal mastery. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the studies of Atafar and Samani (2009) and Khajehei et al. (2014). Atafar and Samani examined the use of organizational-learning components and found that the level of realization of personal mastery is not desirable to some extent. The findings of Khajehei et al.'s (2014) research also confirm this.

Also, the findings also show that from the point of view of the faculty members and students being studied, Kabul University has an average of mental pattern. In shafaei's research (2002), employees' misconceptions about managers' power and managers' wrong mental patterns about employees have been reported as major obstacles to the creation of a learning organization. In Hoveida et al.'s (2007) study, different attitudes and motivations of faculty members and university administrators and lack of appropriate opportunities and opportunities for consensus and exchange of views between faculty and university administrators are obstacles to the realization of the components of the learning organization are known. The findings showed that from the point of view of faculty members and students, Kabul University has an average of shared vision. Zamani et al. (2012) in their study showed that the level of realization of the shared vision component is not optimal. The findings also showed that, from the perspective of faculty members and students, Kabul University has an average of team learning. In Hoveida et al.'s (2007) research, the score team learning in Isfahan public universities has been evaluated as average.

The results showed that from the point of view of faculty members and students, Kabul University, has an average of systematic thinking. Of course, students have a more positive view of the realization of systematic thinking than professors. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the studies of Khajehei et al. (2015) and Firouzian Asl et al. (2016). These researchers showed that the level of realization of systematic thinking is not optimal. On the other hand, the results showed that application of the components of the learning organization in Kabul University has been stronger from the students' point of view with an average of 3.086 and the view of the professors with an average of 2.848. The results of Ghadmagahi and Ahanchian (2005), Rostami and Alizadeh (2015) have also confirmed this finding.

In addition, the results showed that there is no positive and significant difference in terms of gender and faculties the realization of the components of the learning organization. As a result, it is possible that the gender and faculties factors alone may not be the factors influencing the application of the learning organization's components. According to the research findings, in order to facilitate the movement of Kabul University towards the learning organization, special attention should be paid to the following suggestions:

1. Given the specific cultural and social characteristics of Afghan society and its problems and challenges, it is recommended that the main components and characteristics of the learning organization be seriously considered by policymakers and planners as the main drivers of higher education in this country.
2. The managers and decision makers of Kabul University take action to design and implement the necessary training courses in order to develop learning skills, creativity and innovation, effective communication and application of new technologies in their employees, especially faculty members and students.
3. Necessary action should be taken to increase the knowledge and skills of the faculty members of the university in the field of new and active teaching methods and strategies,
4. Provide the necessary grounds and platforms for real participation and meaningful role of professors and students in the educational, cultural affairs of the university,
5. Holding internships and in-service courses for employees and creating study opportunities for managers and faculty members in order to improve their skills and abilities.
6. Attention and use of university officials to the experiences of other universities in the world to achieve the desired components of the learning organization

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