**Organizational Learning: Introduction**

In this series of five articles, we will talk about the topic of organizational learning, where we will explain the concept of organizational learning, levels of organizational learning, single-loop learning model, double-loop learning model, and the organizational learning process.

**Organizational Learning Concept**

There is no dispute that where there is both cognitive and behavioral change, there is learning. We refer to this state as "integrated learning." And where there is no cognitive or behavioral change, there is "no learning. "The more interesting cases are those in which there is change in one with no corresponding change in the other. Our educational system is based on an "anticipatory learning" model: understand, then act. And many organizational changes are based on "forced learning" through edicts or incentive systems that may influence actions but not impact understanding. Unfortunately, when these artificial forces are removed, actions generally revert to their previous state so that one's beliefs (cognition) are in balance with one's actions (Festinger, 1957; Heider 1958). In contrast, "experimental learning" in which an individual suspends his or her belief to try something out, may actually resolve itself into integrated learning, as the actions are interpreted with a fresh mind-set. In cases where cognitive changes are not supported by changes in actions, it is likely that other beliefs override or block the achievement of integrated learning [1], The following figure illustrates the above:

Figure (1): Knowledge, Behavior, Learning
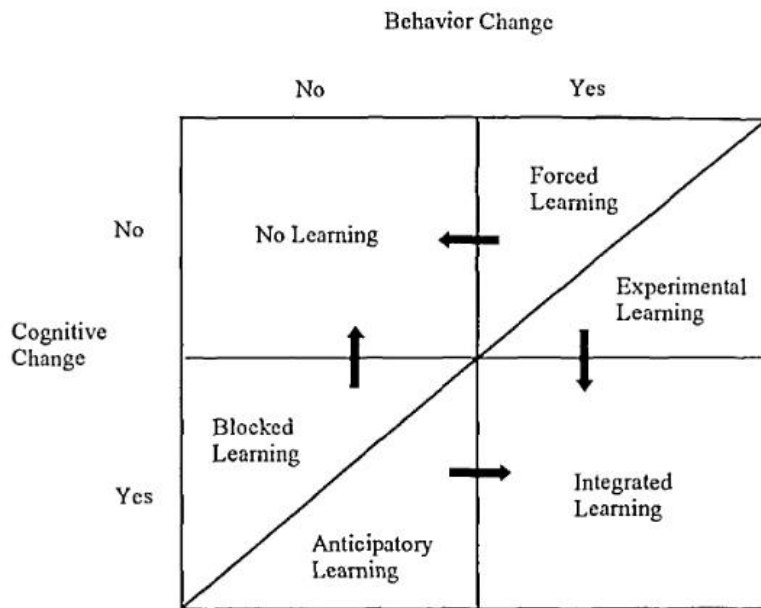


Psychologists discovered learning curves[2] at the individual level more than 100 years ago [3]. An initial discussion on Organizational learning dated back to the work of Cangelosi and Dill (1965) on individual learning and Organizational learning. Organizational learning then became popular in the 1980 and 1990s, marked by a number of seminal contributions to the field such as Hedberg (1981), Fiol and Lyles (1985), Argote and Epple (1990), March (1991) and Huber (1991). Senge (1990) coined the concept learning organization and popularized it in his best- selling book The Fifth Discipline [4]. Two streams exist within the organizational learning research. One stream, most associated with Argyris, focuses on the defensive routines members of organizations often invoke that prevent learning (Argyris 1990). Another stream, most associated with March (Cyert and March 1963), emphasizes how organizations encode lessons from experience into routines that guide future performance, Organizational learning is a vibrant research area that has attracted researchers from a variety of disciplines [5], This is due to researchers' reliance on many schools of thought during their development of the topic of organizational learning. Until the 1960s, learning theories had an underpinning of behaviorism followed by humanism (1960s), then cognitivism (1970s and 1980s) and cognitive constructivism (1980s and 1990s). From 1990 onwards, postmodernism movement dominates theorizing and research in the field of learning [6], where the pace of studies on the subject of organizational learning increased at the beginning of the nineties of the last century with the increasing interest in sources of improving productivity (which include learning)[7].

## Organizational Learning Concept

Organizational learning occurs when individuals act as learning agents for the organization, responding to changes in the organization's internal and external environment by detecting and correcting errors, and then incorporating the results into shared images and maps within the organization[8]. Learning begins with experience. By experience, we mean a unit of task performance. The organization interprets the experience to create knowledge. Researchers characterize experience along different dimensions because different types of experience are found to have different effects on organizational learning. Perhaps the most fundamental dimension of experience is whether the experience is acquired directly by the focal unit[9] or indirectly from the experience of another unit[10].

Organizational learning can occur in an organization in two ways: the first is learning from the organization's own experiences, called internal learning, which can occur as a result of cumulative experience as well as organizational factors related to each organization such as systems, procedures, communications, leadership, and teamwork. The second way is learning from the experiences of other organizations, called external learning. This learning can be in the form of congenital learning, when a new company (after its establishment) learns from the previous experiences of other companies within the industry, or vicarious learning, where companies learn (during their operational life) from the experiences of other companies, or inter-organizational learning through strategic alliances, cooperation, and joint projects[11].

Learning is a phenomenon that, like change, is continuous. In this sense, one may state that organizations are learning organizations by nature[12]. Organizational learning links cognition and action. This differentiates it from the related fields of knowledge management and intellectual capital [13] that is, organizational learning is a continuous learning, rather a steady process than a one-time event due to a specific need for change [14].

Hence, the field of organizational learning has been characterized by a wide diversity of definitions and conceptualizations, which have been used to examine organizational learning issues[15]. where the definitions given by researchers to organizational learning have varied, depending on the intellectual and academic backgrounds of these researchers. Organizational learning has been studied from from various perspectives, such as: sociology, philosophy, economics and

management in general, and production management, organizational change, innovation management and strategic management in business sciences in particular [16]. These definitions include the following:

Table (1): The most important definitions of organizational learning

| Study | Definition |
|---|---|
| Argyris, (1976) | Troubleshooting process |
| Senge, 1990 | Continuous testing and review of experiences and transforming them into knowledge that the organization can obtain and employ for its main purposes. Organizational learning refers to the continuity of employees in maximizing their own capabilities by adopting systematic thinking methods and patterns through setting collective goals and learning in a collective manner |
| Argote et al, (2020) | The process by which experience of performing a specific (defined) task is transformed into knowledge that can be used to bring about change in the organization that affects its future performance |
| Scipioni et al, (2021) | It is the processes of creating, transforming and retrieving knowledge that allow learning to occur at different levels of organizational learning. Accordingly, the learning process includes interconnected cognitive and behavioral changes in individuals that can be institutionalized (formally established) through non-human repositories such as: systems, structures, culture and strategy at the organizational level |
| Kaur and Hirudavaraj, (2021) | The process of acquiring, retrieving, transforming, and updating information within an organizational context. This process is influenced by internal factors (management practices, processes, system variables) and external factors (technological changes, competition, policy changes, market uncertainty). An organization that uses long-term learning as an adaptation mechanism—helping to bring about changes in the external environment—becomes a learning organization |
| Wiyana and Sriathi, (2021) | Organizational learning is the efforts made by companies and employees to maintain and increase the productivity of the |

| | company by adapting to the surrounding environmental conditions that are characterized by continuous development. The correct organizational learning system is the one that generates an atmosphere of creativity, which contributes to strengthening competencies and achieving superior performance. Organizational learning is also the efforts made by companies to disseminate knowledge or provide training to employees, which helps improve the quality of the company in terms of indicators: knowledge sharing patterns, exploring the organizational climate, learning practices, and achievement mentality |
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The primary source of the article is: Al-Farhan, Mohannad. (2022). The role of continuous improvement technique on organizational learning process: An applied study on the electrical appliances manufacturing sector. Master's thesis, Faculty of Commerce – Menoufia University. / The thesis can be obtained by clicking here.

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