

Applied Research Regarding Learning Organization Model Like a Necessary Model for Romanian's Organizations

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Abstract

In the not very far future, competition and performance will be depend on the competences and abilities the individuals and the organizations have at each level so that they can propose, design and implement viable and efficient strategies. Moreover, the high quality standards imposed upon the activities ran in the organizations as well as the opportunities for professional and personal development offered to the members of an organization require a continuous learning process.

The main purpose in this research is the determination of the ways in which the organizations in the West side of Romania are organizations focused on learning.

Keywords: *learning organization, competition, research, quality*

JEL classification: M 10, M 14

1. Research methodology

Regarding the determination of the way in which the Romanian organizations are focused on learning, the study was made on a number of 153 subjects from 22 organizations on the West side of Romania.

The sampling was random and was made after criteria that consider: the profitability rate in the last 3 years, the region where the company conducts its activities, the hierarchical position occupied in the organization.

In this context, we mention that the organizations we investigated were localized only in profit making areas, organizations chosen exclusively from the West side of the country and the respondent subjects are from higher hierarchical structures-36.6% as well as lower ones- 63.4%.

The research method used was the investigation based on survey and the instrument used was the questionnaire.

This includes a number of 5 questions that were made to evaluate a series of aspects such as: personal and profesional development of the respondents, the common vision, the capacity of being open-minded and to learn in a team. The information was processed using the programs SPSS and EXCELL.

The interesting aspect is that the given results show the complexity of the problems the organization in Romania have, as well as some opportunities

regarding the employees desire to be creative, open minded, the manager's involvement in dealing with the new problems that appear in organizations.

2. The analysis of the way in which the Romanian organizations are focused on learning

In order to generate real performances, time lasting, the organizations are building an working environment based on continuous learning, cooperation, results, performance and excellence.

From this perspective, in this study, the concept of organization focused on learning was analyzed using the following elements: common vision, team learning, personal and professional development.

A. COMMON VISION

Considering the idea that the main problems an learning organization has can be generated by the lack of a strategy for development, initiative, flexibility, adaptability to change and creativity, the research results show a series of important aspects.

A direct effect of the incapacity of the organization of having a coherent, lasting vision to ensure a continuity is the lack of a development strategy which is notified by the respondents but, unfortunately, the number of those who consider this an important problem is a small one.

This indicates that there is a great lack of responsibility from all the members of the organization: managers and subordinates. What can be noticed in this case is the convergence in opinions, opinions that show a situation that is unfavorable for the organization.

Regarding the lack of initiative, it represents a real break in the existence and development of an organization, an important cause if the organization wishes to be competitive on the market. The data retrieved from the respondents confirms the lack of initiative.

The idea that the lack of initiative is less important in the opinion of the members of an organization, regardless the fact that they are managers or subordinates is extremely harmful for the progress and the development of the organization because it leads in a short period of time to the incapacity of facing the opportunities in its environment.

In our opinion, this could be an explanation for the fact that the companies in Romania have short term as well as on long term losses.

Moreover, other possible explanations could be given by: the absence of flexibility, adaptability, creativity. Nowadays those who have real chances for succes and development given the fact that the environment where they place their activity are the organizations that are interested in flexibility, adaptability to change and competitiveness. This shows that regarding the degree of adaptability perceived by the respondents, the results are in the same trend which means that a great part of the subjects give a small importance to this adaptability and flexibility

problem. This reveals the conservatism, the lack of vision, a strict behaviour coming from the managers, behaviour that can influence the attitudes of the others, the employees with working positions.

The same situation presents when we talk about the lack of creativity in organizations, this representing the reason why the company learns. This is a situation that is not favourable for the organizations that wish to grow and to develop and it is known that without creativity there can be no progress and nothing new would be discovered.

The double percentage of the subordinates in comparison with the managers show that the employees that have execution positions want to be more innovative in the activity they have at their job but the lack of support from their superiors makes them act in a continuous state of uncertainty.

B. OPEN-MINDED ATTITUDE

The existing systems are not capable to successfully deal with the existing long-term challenges- globalization, demographic growth, digital technology, the degradation of the environment- in terms of the competences given to individuals, groups and organizations in order to adapt dynamically to the changes that appear in an environment that is more complex and uncertain. In a not very far future the competition and performance will depend in an essential way on the competences, the knowledge and abilities the individuals and the organizations have in order to propose, design and implement viable and efficient strategies.

In this situation the anticipative thinking, the fact that they are open-minded are inner demands for the organizations that want to achieve long term performances.

From the perspective of encouraging the new ideas the study shows that the opinions differ again on hierarchical levels, the subordinates stating in a smaller percentage than the managers that they are encouraged to express their ideas. On the other hand, almost a half of the managers have a different perception of this and they consider that that encourage new ideas.

The difference between the opinion of the two categories of subjects show that in organizations there are problems even from this perspective.

There is gratifying fact, that there are managers- although in a small percentage of 10,7%- who admit that they encourage the creativity and initiative of their subordinates in a small way. We consider this an expression of responsibility that the managers have taken regarding their role in promoting progress.

Regarding the opportunities of learning new things, in any organization that wishes to be dynamic, open-minded, and with various influences from the environment, the building of a favorable frame for the process of learning appears as a natural characteristic.

As the results show, the subordinates appreciate the opportunity of learning new things in a bigger proportion than the managers and this fact shows that they are more open-minded.

A very important aspect is shown by the answers the subjects gave regarding the involvement of the managers in solving new problems as, somehow contrary to the other results so far regarding the degree of opening to new, this appears almost unanimously accepted by both categories.

We consider that this aspect means a great level of interest for making things work in organizations even if there still are many situations in which this does not happen.

C. TEAM LEARNING

The teams, a superior form of social organization, oriented more towards the objectives than the organization, present a great flexibility because they can be easily made, dissolved, reorganized, resized. In the context in which the team is an excellent environment for learning, the team learning becomes an important solution for dealing with complex problems that require opinions and complex and different knowledge.

Concerning the team learning, the answers the subjects gave showed that the ability of team learning is extremely important. Giving the higher level of appreciation managers as well as the subordinates, this shows that team learning has become a sine-qua-non condition for achieving performance at personal level as well as in the company.

Learning in a team became nowadays a fundamental premise for achieving excellent results.

D. PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

High quality standards imposed upon the activity in the organization as well as the personal as well as professional development opportunities offered to the members of an organization require a continuous process of learning.

Concerning the professional and personal development, if more than half of the managers consider that they have a successful career, there also is an important percentage of the managers (over a quarter of them) who appreciate the fact that they are in a stagnating stage of their careers. Regarding the subordinates, the results are even more interesting because they show an equilibrium in their opinions, some appreciating positively their evolution and some not.

In our opinion, this situation is generated by the perception each has on responsibility: some are satisfied by the fact that their responsibilities correspond the level of competence they achieved, some not, in the latter appearing a feeling of frustration, dissatisfaction, demotivation in work.

The professional and personal development equally refers to the professional training, development of necessary abilities at the working place, free expression of opinion, initiative and new ideas, stability and safety regarding the job, aspects analyzed in the following part and which provides important conclusions.

Considering the providing of training programs, the results show a convergence of opinions which means that both managers and subordinates consider trainings to have a fundamental role in the development of competences

and abilities needed for a good going of activities at the working place. This proves that a great part of them are aware of the fact that through training they can develop their knowledge and abilities they need to meet their objectives. Moreover, by training the employees get to better understand what it is asked from them and the role they can have in the organization.

In our opinion, the participation of the employees at a series of trainings has some benefits because by developing new competences this learn how to solve with professionalism the problems that can appear in the activity they have in the organization, they gain a motivation for performance and the also understand that the organization appreciates their qualities and they are important for the development of the company.

About the free expression of opinion, the initiative and the new ideas seen from the perspective of professional and personal development the research shows that if most managers say they encourage the freedom of expression there are fewer those who say that among the subjects with execution positions.

This situation suggest that in these organizations there are different views about the lack of communication at all levels, of the oscillating behavior of managers who act under the impulse of having instant results, the incapacity of the managers or the lack of will in noticing the real problems that exist in the organizations they manage.

We consider we have a relevant result for the organizational environment in Romania regarding the safety of the job. Considering this and the concept of professional and personal development the information describes a normal situation.

We mention normality because according to the managerial culture in Romania the safety of the job of managers has been transformed in a fundamental need with stronger accents than in the case of simple employees and that is because of the benefits this position offers. Therefore, if in the case of employees with execution positions we find different opinions in all 5 levels of appreciation, in the case of managers these say that a representative element for their professional and personal development is the safety of the job.

These affirmations are also strengthened by the conclusion regarding the fact that respondents would rather have a safer job that is less paid than a job that is not that safe but well paid, conclusion that shows the lack of flexibility and adaptability of these individuals regarding the challenges that appear in the organizational environment, challenges that impose a new set of competences and are mostly oriented towards performance.

These things considered, the safety of the job is an important motivational factor for employees in all the organizations we studied, who manage to achieve their goals not being threatened by the possibility of losing their job. We think that, in this case, this aspect is a reflection of cultural representations specific to many organizations in Romania, representations that prove to be old. Nowadays the culture of a job for life has ended. As an effect of this, the security of the position one has as an employee, either manager or subordinate will be exclusively based on

performance and competence and not on the model of paternal dependence. This is about a new relationship, more mature between the employer and the employee, relationship that encourages the capacity of making the best of all the learning opportunities given by the organization.

Besides job security the extra benefits offered by other organizations represent another motivational element that determines the attraction and loyalty of quality, competent, open-minded and willing to improve employees.

From this perspective the answers we have show that managers, over 50% of them consider that they offer this kind of benefits, whereas the subordinates, little less over 50% say that the organization offers little or none at all comparing to other organizations.

We have to state that there are among the subordinates opinions according to which these extra benefits are more than in other companies which shows that individuals have different needs, the satisfaction of these needs meaning a personal and professional development.

Final conclusions

Nowadays elements as the opportunity of using one's potential in an ongoing activity, the opportunity of having a great job, of learning new things have a great importance for the employees as well as the material incentives, that are still the main element that encourages the high involvement of the Romanian employees.

In the western companies of Romania we can notice the need of creating a transparent environment based on communication and trust which will give the employees a strong feeling of support.

This happens even more due to the fact that the employees, mostly those at the bottom of the organization, feel that the traditional elements can create problems in the future. As a consequence, these employees are more willing to change than their managers.

The fact that many managers have a different perception than their subordinates on the problems that appear in the organizations leads to the emerging of an opened conflict between the two parts, which is harmful for everyone.

The results of this study show that in the Western region the organizations face a series of problems that appear due to the managers' lack of capacity or even lack of will in noticing the real problems that the organization has. In the end it is all about attitude, behavior and organizational culture.

The conclusion drawn from this complex analyze is that, in the social and economical context in this region, there is a mixture of values and a poor leadership that stands in the way of performance and competitiveness. The lack of initiative and the lack of new ideas concerning the personal and professional development strategies and the lack of support for employee initiative are the things that drive the organizations in Romania to have a difficult life.

We appreciate that, in this context, the need of infusion of the elements that define a learning organization, of team learning, of promoting new ideas that would lead to professional involvement is felt stronger and stronger.

Today, the organizations understand that the main characteristics of performance are provided by: taking on new, complex responsibilities, the orientation towards teamwork, the attitude towards change and the continuous learning, the gaining of respect for the employees, the loyalty and trust in those working for the company as well as the clients.

All in all, reaching performance as an individual and as a company depends only on our ability of acting on those terms.

We strongly believe that, in the future, only the organizations that will follow these principles will last and will succeed.

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