Effective Social factors on Organizational Learning

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Abstract: This study aims to explore and analyze the Social factors that influence the development of Organizational Learning.The paper used analytic hierarchy process (AHP) to ranking the effective Social factors on Organizational Learning. This is the first research project to focus primarily on identifying specific factors in the environment which have a positive impact on Organizational Learning. From the AHP results, we can understand that most important effective Social factor on Organizational Learning is Leadership style. Moreover, the less important effective Social factor on Organizational Learning is various organizational characteristics. The findings of this study can serve as a basis and frame of reference for the future planning of Organizational Learning.
[Davood Gharakhani, Amid Pourghafar Maghferati, Mehrdad Tavakolirad. **Effective Social factors on Organizational Learning.** *Life Sci J* 2012;9(4):1820-1826] (ISSN:1097-8135). http://www.lifesciencesite.com. 276

Keywords: Social factors, Organizational Learning, MCDM, AHP

1. Introduction

During the last two decades the world economy has experienced an extraordinary transformation. Intensified global competition and reorganization of economic boundaries have significantly shortened the product and process lifecycles forcing firms to develop a continuous stream of innovation (Achrol, 1991). To be successful, organizations must not only process information but also acquire and create new information and knowledge. To this end, organizational learning creates competitive advantage by increasing marketing capabilities leading to desired outcomes (Das & Kumar, 2009). Bell et. al. (2002) presented a review of organizational learning literature organized into four different schools of thought - namely, economic, developmental, managerial, and process. Entrepreneurship has never been more important than it is currently, and one of the major challenges facing all economies is the "need to develop a more entrepreneurial culture and develop the necessary skills, attitudes and behaviors to prepare young people and others to pursue opportunities" (Wilson, 2009). Social interactive learning has influential impacts on enabling entrepreneurs to explore opportunities and cope with crises of the new business management (Pittaway & Cope, 2007).

Social interaction has also prominent contributions in developing students' entrepreneurial qualities in pre-launching stage of new venture creation in many ways. First, social interaction improves students' self-awareness of their entrepreneurial capability, their maturity in communication skills and networking, and their ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills to solve problems (Fuchs, Werner & Wallau., 2008). Second, social interactive learning enhances students' entrepreneurial creativity and innovativeness (Ko & Butler, 2007). Third, knowledge and skills acquired from social interactions between various students having different experiences and perspectives are of a higher level than knowledge and skills acquired by individuals (Pittaway & Cope, 2007). Furthermore, social interaction creates a synergy between individual and collective learning which makes entrepreneurial learning more in-depth and longer-lasting (Man & Yu, 2007).Many knowledge management definitions exist. For the purpose of this paper, only selected definitions will be focused on. Gloet and Terziovski (2004) describe knowledge management as the formalization of and access to experience, knowledge, and expertise that create new capabilities, enable superior performance, encourage innovation, and enhance customer value. The authors also describe knowledge management as an umbrella term for a variety of interlocking terms, such as knowledge creation, knowledge valuation and metrics, knowledge mapping and indexing, knowledge transport, storage and distribution and knowledge sharing.Organizational structure comprises the organizational hierarchy, rules and regulations, and reporting relationships and is considered a means of co-ordination and control whereby organizational actors can be directed towards organizational effectiveness.Organisations reduce uncertainty by acquiring information through periodical reports, rules, operational standards, procedures and data analysis in an objective manner. For uncertainties to be reduced, it is necessary for there to be a transfer of explicit knowledge, which can

be formalised and easily understood. Corbett (2005) utilized Kolb's theory of experiential learning when he examined the meaning of learning in the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities. He based his examination on Hills et al.'s (1999) model of the opportunity recognition process which he connected with Kolb's learning styles. According to Corbett, convergent and assimilative learning styles offer good qualifications for finding an entrepreneurial opportunity. Divergent and accommodative styles, on the other hand, are useful in evaluating possibilities and in planning the execution. Corbett justifies his perspective by arguing that, in the phase of finding opportunities, the ability to perceive entities and to solve problems is especially needed. Whereas in the formation phase the emphasis is on the active testing of possibilities Entrepreneurs have generally been seen as operation-oriented persons (Bird, 1988) who believe in learning by doing and absorb things through experiments and mistakes (Baum et al., 2003). Moreover, Baum et al. (2003) noticed that the firms owned by entrepreneurs who learn by practical experience and active testing are more likely to achieve faster growth. Experimental learning is also of interest in researching habitual entrepreneurship.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Entrepreneurial learning

Entrepreneurial learning is usually defined as a continuous process leading to the development of knowledge required for starting and managing a firm (Politis, 2005). For example, according to Smilor, efficient entrepreneurs are often exceptionally good learners who learn from almost all their experiences; for example, by working with their customers, suppliers and competitors. Important events which threaten the continuity of the firm have been observed to be good sources of learning (Cope, 2003). Kolb is one of the best-known researchers of experiential learning and his theory is presented in this study because it is central to most recent studies seeking to model entrepreneurial learning (Corbett, 2005; Politis, 2005). Experiential learning is a process by which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. In Kolb's theory learning is a four-stage cycle involving four adaptive learning styles: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Concrete experiences (i.e. previous learning results) form the core of the circle model. The meaning of an experience is contemplated through reflective observations, after which an opinion is formed about why a certain experience happened. This opinion or theory is finally tested through active experimenting. Learning requires both understanding the experience and converting it according to each situation. Kolb identifies four different elementary forms of

knowledge: assimilative, convergent, divergent and accommodative knowledge. Entrepreneurial experience has been examined as an individual characteristic influenced by the entrepreneur's personal history and work experience (Reuber and Fischer, 1999). According to Reuber and Fischer (1999), entrepreneurial experience consists of proficiency developed over the course of time (stock of experience) and knowledge accumulated through certain discrete events (stream of experience). Westhead et al. (2005), for example, made the observation that there are differences between novice and habitual entrepreneurs especially the latter's greater experience.

Previous entrepreneurial experience can facilitate the recognition of new opportunities and accumulated managerial knowledge and technical know-how together with existing networks intensify the exploitation of those opportunities (Westhead et al., 2004). Entrepreneurial experience makes it possible to recognise the measures needed to develop the business and networks provide access to information and resources reducing the disadvantages of novelty and lack of size (Starr and Bygrave, 1991).

A review of the literature on entrepreneurial learning indicates that the concept has been defined based on the acquired knowledge and skills in two stages of entrepreneurship process. First stage is pre-launching where individuals learn requisite knowledge and competencies for new venture creation and leadership (Heinonen & Poikkijoki, 2006; Erikson, 2003). Therefore, entrepreneurial learning in this stage is the cognitive processes of gaining and structuring entrepreneurial knowledge and skills (Rae & Carswell, 2000) and educators attempt to effectively equip students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills of entrepreneurship (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). Second stage is post-launching where entrepreneurs learn and develop their competencies through performing different tasks and roles involved in entrepreneurship and facing the challenges and problems of leading entrepreneurial activities (Kempster & Cope, 2010). In effect, entrepreneurial learning in post-launching stage reflects the dynamic processes of acquiring, assimilating, and organizing new information and knowledge and incorporating them with pre-existing structures in order to successfully leading entrepreneurial routine and strategic tasks and roles (Holcomb et al., 2009). Therefore, learning encompasses acquiring knowledge from past experiences, combining learning from various resources, and transferring the knowledge and skills to effectively leading entrepreneurial activities (Politis, 2005). Entrepreneurship training programs at this stage concentrate on equipping entrepreneurs with competencies to analyze their past experiences

specifically their failures and transfer the information and knowledge to effectively leading their new businesses (Politis & Gabrielsson, 2009).

2.2 Social entrepreneurship

Traditionally the free market and aid (from the rich countries to the poor) have been seen as the alleviators of poverty but, as Handy (1997) has recognized, markets can lower standards as well as raise them. As a consequence, they can deepen rather than reduce differences. At the same time, five decades of foreign aid have failed to reduce global poverty, and it is being recognized, increasingly, that "aid is neither necessary nor sufficient to ensure sustainable development and poverty reduction in poor countries" (Griffiths and Tan, 2007). This has led several commentators to suggest that what is needed are different forms of intervention, among which are an enterprise approach to poverty alleviation by building "commercially sustainable companies that create jobs and empower the poor to improve their livelihoods" (Griffiths and Tan, 2007). In this article, therefore, social entrepreneurship is perceived to be about applying the expertise, talents and resources of entrepreneurs to the variety of problems developing countries face, such as education, health, personal safety and security, poverty alleviation, social advancement, environmental sustainability, and so forth. Although rooted in Victorian social philanthropy, modern social enterprise is a relatively new phenomenon (Alvord et al., 2004) and although there is a lack of any universally agreed definition of the term (Henry et al., 2006), there is broad agreement (Bishop and Green, 2008) that social entrepreneurs "bring to social problems the same enterprise and imagination that business entrepreneurs bring to wealth creation". How do entrepreneurs learn and how can learning be seen in their entrepreneurial activities? Many different researchers have sought to find answers to these questions, for example, by using the critical incident technique (Cope and Watts, 2000) and the narrative method (Rae, 2000). Most researchers have, however, focused on entrepreneurs in general, whereas learning in the context of habitual entrepreneurship has been of less interest.

The organisational culture must foster debate and understanding for knowledge ambiguity to be reduced. The type of media selected should assist in processing "rich" information. Daft and Lengel (1986) consider "information richness" as "the ability of information to change perception within a certain time interval". Therefore, the form of communication used to transfer ambiguous knowledge should be rich, that is it should facilitate understanding (Daft and Lengel, 1986). The richness of the media used could be characterised by its capacity to allow sharing of visions, insights, swift understanding and the use of a variety of languages.

2.3 Organizational Leaning

In bringing together firms with different skills and knowledge bases, alliances create unique learning opportunities for the partner firms (Inkpen 1998). Organizational learning is the acquisition of new knowledge by the actors, who are able and willing to apply that knowledge in making decisions or influencing others in the organization (Miller 1996). Organizational learning is both a function of access to new knowledge and the capabilities for using and building on such knowledge. Interactive learning allows managers to exchange a good deal of information with one another which fosters more realistic collaboration (Das & Kumar, 2007). Characteristic of entrepreneur played an important role on ensuring the business success in organization. Characteristic of entrepreneur referred to demographic characteristic, individual characteristic, personal traits, entrepreneur orientation, and entrepreneur readiness. Several previous studies found that demographic characteristics, such as age and gender, and individual background, e.g. education and former work experience, had an impact on entrepreneurial intention and endeavor, personal qualities and traits, such as self-confidence and perseverance, entrepreneurial orientation, e.g. autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, pro-activeness, competitive aggressiveness, and motivation, entrepreneurial readiness in this study refers to self-efficacy.

2.4 Top Management Attitude toward Learning

Attitudes are learned states that influence the choice of personal action the individual makes toward persons, objects, or events (Chakraborty et. al., 2007). The management of knowledge has become an important role for top management (Prahalad and Hamel 1994). Successful, organizations must not only process information but must also acquire and create new information and knowledge. Based on the top management's attitude toward learning, in some alliances, partners aggressively seek to acquire knowledge and skills where as in others' the partners take a more passive approach to knowledge acquisition and learning (Vanttinen & Pyhalto, 2009).

2.5 Effective Social factors on Organizational Learning

In recent years, the social aspects of Organizational Learning have become clearer than before.

Amabile (1988) concluded nine stimulants:
(1) Freedom;
(2) Good project management;
(3) Sufficient resources;
(4) Encouragement;
(5) Various organizational characteristics;
(6) Recognition;
(7) Sufficient time;

(8) Challenge; and
(9) Pressure.

Andriopoulos (2001) reviewed the literature dealing with the factors that contribute to Learning in an organization and concluded that there are five critical factors to it:
(1) Organizational climate;
(2) Leadership style;
(3) Resources and skills;
(4) Organizational culture; and
(5) Structure and systems.

Maken (1991) suggested that there are six factors that improve the Learning of hotel salespersons. These factors are:
(1) Encouragement and rewards for creativity;
(2) Exposure to outside stimuli;
(3) The provision of in-house training and education;
(4) Encouragement for organized work habits;
(5) Planning for participatory management and career enrichment; and
(6) Paving the way for professional development.

3. Research Methodology

Researcher tries to recognize the Effective Social factors on Organizational Learning, which is done through library studies, design and distribution of questionnaire and also interview with different manufacturing companies' experts, Effective Social factors on Organizational Learning is classified into 3 major criteria and 12 minor criteria. In second stage, the researcher makes decisions matrix in order to ranking the recognized criteria. In order to gather these data, another questionnaire is designed and distributed among 10 experts in IT industry.

4. Data analysis techniques

After completion of the questionnaire No. 2, its data were integrated using Expert Choice Software. This software includes wide range of facilities for obtaining people's paired comparisons matrix and then integration of different people's matrices and making a single matrix. EC Software was also used to achieve relative weight and final criteria and final ranking of Effective Social factors on Organizational Learning.

4.1 Data analysis

Here, the data achieved from Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) are depicted in the form of the following tables:

Table 1: relative and total weight of three main criteria			
criteria	relative weight	total weight	rank
Managerial factors	0.432	0.432	1
Organizational factors	0.241	0.241	3
Strategic factors	0.327	0.327	2

Table 2: relative and total weights of Managerial factors			
sub-criteria	relative weight	total weight	rank
Recognition	0.116	0.0501	11
Encouragement	0.212	0.0916	4
Leadership style	0.405	0.1749	1
training and education	0.267	0.1153	3

Table 3: Relative and total weight of Organizational factors			
sub-criteria	relative weight	total weight	rank
Organizational climate	0.237	0.0571	10
Organizational culture	0.320	0.0771	5
Various organizational characteristics	0.128	0.0309	12
Structure and systems	0.315	0.0759	6

Table 4: Relative and total weight of Strategic factors			
sub-criteria	relative weight	total weight	rank
Freedom	0.193	0.0631	9
Resources and skills	0.373	0.1219	2
Paving the way for professional development	0.202	0.0660	8
Planning for participatory management	0.232	0.0758	7

According to the results, experts believe that the most important Effective Social factor on Organizational Learning is Leadership style, whose total weight is 0.1749. Resources and skills is the second factor. The less important effective Social factor on Organizational Learning is Recognition with total weight of 0.0501 and various organizational characteristics with total weight of 0.0309.

For better understanding of ranking the Effective Social factor on Organizational Learning, three main criteria and known 12 criteria along with their relative and total weights are depicted in table 5.

Table 5: ranking the Effective Social factors on Organizational Learning

main criteria	Weight of the main criteria	sub-criteria	Weigh criteria in sub group	total weight	rank
Managerial factors	0.432	Recognition	0.116	0.0501	11
		Encouragement	0.212	0.0916	4
		Leadership style	0.405	0.1749	1
		training and education	0.267	0.1153	3
Organizational factors	0.241	Organizational climate	0.237	0.0571	10
		Organizational culture	0.320	0.0771	5
		Various organizational characteristics	0.128	0.0309	12
		Structure and systems	0.315	0.0759	6
Strategic factors	0.327	Freedom	0.193	0.0631	9
		Resources and skills	0.373	0.1219	2
		Paving the way for professional development	0.202	0.0660	8
		Planning for participatory management	0.232	0.0758	7

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is identify and ranking the effective Social factors on Organizational Learning. The research results show that among main recognized criteria, Managerial factors , Strategic factors and Organizational factors are respectively ranked as the most important Social factor on Organizational Learning in case study. According to experts also, among 12 recognized sub-criteria, factors such as Leadership style, Resources and skills, training and education and Encouragement are are respectively known as important factors of Organizational Learning and are of higher priority and importance. Moreover, the less important effective Social factor on Organizational Learning is various organizational characteristics. Several previous studies found that demographic characteristics, such as age and gender, and individual background, e.g. education and former work experience, had an impact on entrepreneurial intention and endeavor, personal qualities and traits, such as self-confidence and perseverance, entrepreneurial orientation, e.g. autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, pro-activeness, competitive aggressiveness, and motivation, entrepreneurial readiness in this study refers to self-efficacy.There are other multiple attribute decision-making methods such as TOPSIS and VIKOUR, which could be applied for ranking the effective Social factors on Organizational Learning.

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10/18/2012