

Are the Egyptian travel agencies learning organizations?

Bassam Samir ALROMEEDY¹, Fatma Zohra TALHI²

¹ University of Sadat City, Egypt, (bassam.samir@fth.usc.edu.eg)

² University souk ahras, Alegria, (fatmazohra.talhi@yahoo.fr)

Received: 04/08/2018

Accepted: 26/12/2018

Published: 23/01/2019

Abstract

Learning organization characteristics supports travel agencies to keep up with constant changes in tourism labor market. Also, learning organization characteristics help travel agencies achieve the sustainable competitive advantage. The study focused on answering the question: To what extent the Egyptian travel agencies have the characteristics of the learning organizations?. Out of 250 questionnaires distributed on a random sample of employees in travel agencies – category A in greater Cairo, 216 have been retrieved and found usable for analysis. The study proved that the Egyptian travel agencies – category A in greater Cairo have the learning organizations' characteristics. Therefore, Egyptian travel agencies – category A are considered learning organizations. The study recommended that considering learning the base of work and success on intensive competitive business environment.

Keywords: learning organization, organizational learning, travel agencies, Egypt.

JEL Classification Codes: Z32.

ملخص

تدعم خصائص المنظمات المتعلمة شركات السياحة لمواكبة التغيرات المستمرة في سوق العمل السياحي، كما تساعد تلك الخصائص في تحقيق الميزة التنافسية المستدامة. وقد ركزت الدراسة علي الإجابة علي التساؤل التالي: إلي أي مدي تمتلك شركات السياحة المصرية خصائص المنظمات المتعلمة؟

Corresponding author: Bassam Alromeedy, e-mail: bassam.samir@fth.usc.edu.eg.

تم توزيع 250 استمارة استقصاء علي عينة عشوائية من العاملين في شركات السياحة المصرية فئة "أ" بالقاهرة الكبرى، وتم استرداد 216 استمارة صالحة للتحليل. وقد توصلت الدراسة أن شركات السياحة المصرية فئة "أ" بالقاهرة الكبرى تمتلك خصائص المنظمات المتعلمة، ومن ثم تعد تلك الشركات منظمات متعلمة. وقد أوصت الدراسة بأن التعلم أساس العمل والنجاح في بيئة العمل شديدة التنافسية.

كلمات مفتاحية: المنظمات المتعلمة، التعلم التنظيمي، شركات السياحة، مصر.

1. Introduction:

Rapid changes in business environment, changes in the workforce abilities (Alipour et al., 2011), complexity and uncertainty of business environment, increasing customer needs (Singh, 2010), intensive competition (Korth, 2007), technological advancement and financial instability (Dekoulou and Trivellas, 2015) are the explicit features of current business environment (Nejad et al., 2012). Organizations that seek for strong performance and increasing their competitiveness should have the ability to create process, share and integrate new knowledge in order to be learning organizations (Balay, 2012). To be a learning organization is unavoidable in the fast and evolving business environment. Accordingly, these organizations are compelled to be learning organizations to cope with rapid changes in business environment (Recepoğlu, 2013). Employees should have innovation and creative ideas, academic excellence, skill for doing work, ardent to learn, and having the ability to adapt with changing in the 21st century (Dararat and Taechamaneestit, 2015).

The concept of learning organization became important as a source of competitiveness (Farrukh and Waheed, 2015). Learning organizations are those organizations that are keen to permanently learn in order to achieve their objectives and competitiveness (Chan and Scott-Ladd, 2004). The characteristics that distinguish the learning organization from the traditional are leadership, communicating information, empowerment, good organizational culture employees participating in setting organization's strategy and horizontal structure (Kraleva, 2011). Hence, it is imperative to be learning organizations; this is considered a strategic decision and an important factor for achieving competitive advantage in volatile business

environment (Khasawneh, 2011). There are some conditions for being learning organization, such as employees' tendency to risk taking, supporting organizational culture that provides an environment for information and knowledge sharing and dissemination (Kraleva, 2011). Additionally, providing a convenient structure and compatible strategy. Learning Organizations focus on continuous development (Gandolfi, 2006), helping organizations to adapt and response with changes successfully and effectively through developing structures and systems (Alas et al., 2012). It is imperative to strengthen and encourage employees, rather than managing employees (Yaşlıoğlu et al., 2014). Organizations' ability for continuous development to face the challenges in the environment has been related to the ability of these organizations to learn (Senge, 1990). Organizations seeks to be learning organization in order to create and provide new products or services to meet consumer needs, and then gaining sustainable competitive advantage (Vargas, 2015). Learning organization tend to create an organizational culture of learning (Gagnon et al., 2015). Sustainable organizations are learning organizations (Brazdauskas and Gaigalaite, 2015). The learning organization is widespread concept in the fast-growing businesses, like tourism industry (Kraleva, 2011). Tourism organizations should be learning organization to support their competitiveness, abilities and innovation. In hotels, applying learning organization theory support achieving sustainability goals (Brazdauskas and Gaigalaite, 2015). As they seek to provide the best products and services to their customers; tourism learning organization creates attitudes, processes and developing strategies. Also, these organizations try to be the best, and distinguish it from other competitors. Moreover, Tourism organizations need to become learning organizations, if they are seeking to reinforce their competitive advantage, efficiency and innovation (Kraleva, 2011).

Considering all this, the study presented here aims to answer the following question: To what extent the Egyptian travel agencies have the characteristics of the learning organizations?

This study is structured as follows: the next section outlines the concept of learning organization and its dimensions, characteristics and

importance. Then, the methodology and discussion of results, conclusion and recommendations. Finally, areas of further studies are presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational learning vs learning organization:

There is a high consensus on the importance of learning processes in different organizations, besides increasing the importance of the learning organization and organizational learning concepts during the previous few decades (Lazarová et al., 2013). Learning organization concept was mentioned in Peter Senge's: *The Fifth Discipline-The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (Theptheпа and Mitsufuji , 2016). Organizational learning and learning organization were slightly used interchangeably in literature, but they are considered different concepts (Lien et al., 2006). Moreover, the learning organization and organizational learning are two sides of the same coin, where the organizational learning is the major activity in the learning organization (Abdullah and Kassim , 2008). Organizational learning refers to activities within the organization, while learning organization is the type of organization (Farrukh and Waheed, 2015). Additionally, organizational learning covers the sharing of the knowledge, values and assumptions of the individuals or groups in an organization (Yaşlıoğlu et al., 2014). learning organization has been defined according to a number of approaches as: A) Systems thinking approach: learning organization refer to employees who permanently seeks to develop their abilities to achieve the desire objectives by new thinking patterns, collective aspiration (Vatankhah et al., 2011), and team learning (Kalmuk and Acar, 2015). B) Learning perspective; learning organization is an organization that facilitates the employees' learning and constantly improves itself to achieve its strategic goals (Yang et al., 2004). C) Strategic perspective: learning organization is the ability of organization to create, acquire, and share knowledge, and amend behavior to highlight new knowledge and ideas (Kuşcu et al., 2015). D) Integrative perspective: An integrated model for learning organization was developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993) (Song et al., 2009).

2.2 Learning Organization characteristics and Dimensions:

Learning organization is an organization that improves its capabilities

on a continuous basis for long term benefits (Senge, 1990). Learning and work are combined in a continuance systematic technique to continue the improvements of individual, group and organization within learning organization (Hussein et al., 2016). Also, learning organizations provide continuous learning opportunities, using learning to reach their goals, linking individual performance with organizational performance, fostering inquiry and dialogue, considering creative and innovation as a source of sustainable competitive advantages and interacting with their environment continuously (Nakpodia, 2009). learning organizations are characterized by cultural values, leadership commitment and empowerment, communication, knowledge sharing, employee characteristics and performance upgrading (Sudharatna and Li , 2004). Moreover, features of learning organizations, are risk taking, support and recognition for learning, resources to perform the job knowledge management and training and learning environment (Kontoghiorghes et al., 2005). The most significant characteristics of a learning organization which is how they view their competitors. The learning organization deals with its competitors as a means for learning, rather than competition. Moreover, a learning organization considers its competition as an advantage, rather than a threat (Kraleva, 2011).

In his book: *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge (1990) depicted five disciplines of learning organization to achieve the goal of building a learning organization (Maden, 2012). These disciplines are personal mastery (Abbasi et al., 2012), mental models (Ponnuswamy and Manohar, 2016), shared vision, team learning, and system thinking (Kumar, 2015). These disciplines support infrastructure creation that reinforces continuous learning, adaptation, and organizations growth. So, one of the main goals of the learning organization is constructing an organizational culture of learning (Gagnon et al., 2015). (Goh, 2003) divided learning organization into five dimensions, which are Clarity of vision, Leadership commitment and empowerment, Experimentation and rewards, Effective transfer of knowledge, and Teamwork and group problem solving.

Learning occurs on three levels: individual, group, and organization (Tafvelin et al., 2017). Learning organization's model of Watkins and

Marsick's includes Systems-level and continuous learning that lead to create and manage knowledge outcomes which improve organization's performance and capacity for change (Rus et al., 2014). As Watkins and Marsick's (1993) mentioned, there are seven dimensions of learning organization, which are continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded systems, empowerment, system connection and strategic leadership (Watkins and Marsick, 1993).

2.3 Important of learning organization:

A learning organization facilitates the learning of all its employees and continuously transforms itself (Alipour et al., 2011; Nakpodia, 2009), and help organizations that endeavor for survival in competitive business environment (Haeffner et al., 2012). Learning support knowledge both explicit and implicit, change behavior, attitude, the way of thinking and performance of employees (Najafbagy and Doroudi, 2010). Learning organization aims to create an organizational culture of learning (Gagnon et al., 2015). Moreover, organizational learning explores and corrects errors, besides sharing the knowledge between employees and team within organizations (Najafbagy and Doroudi, 2010). Learning organization became an in important key factor in the success of organizations (Nazem and Mozaiini , 2014). learning organization positively improve organizational performance (Hanaysha, 2016), job satisfaction (Mirkamali et al., 2011) and employees commitment (Dekoulou and Trivellas, 2015).

Organizational learning reinforce permanent adapting and developing organization (Onağ et al., 2014). Learning organization develop a mechanism that provide resources and capabilities to decrease time and cost of determining the requirements of market, fulfill customer needs (Akgün et al., 2014), dealing more efficiently with rapid changes (Hsiao, 2011), exploiting opportunities in new markets, and facing threats in markets (Yeung et al., 2006). Additionally, learning organization seek to attract knowledge workers, decrease turnover and absenteeism (Kontoghiorghes et al., 2005), delivering products quickly, dealing with emergent problems and customers complaints (Ellinger et al., 2002). Learning organization is a source of gaining competitive advantage in business environment (Dicle and Köse , 2014). Learning organization provide opportunity for achieving

organizational profitability (Davis and Daley, 2008). Learning organization is considered a vital factor for gaining sustainable competitiveness (Prelipcean and Bejinaru , 2016).

3. Methodology:

The objective of this study is to answer the following question: To what extent the Egyptian travel agencies have the characteristics of the learning organizations? In order to achieve this objective, the researcher used questionnaire to gather statistical data about demographic and other work related information of the respondents and the characteristics of learning organization within the Egyptian travel agencies.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A includes demographic and other work related information of the respondents (gender, age, education, position and work experience). Sections B represents learning organization dimensions including 21 items on a five-point Likert-type rating scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) modified from the scale developed by (Watkins and Marsick, 1997). The scale includes seven dimensions to identify the availability of learning organization characteristics in the Egyptian travel agencies – category A – in the greater Cairo region. These dimensions are:

Continuous Learning, refers to organization's attitudes to provide continuous learning opportunities for their employees (Jyothibabu et al., 2010).

Inquiry and Dialogue, represents an organization's effort to create a culture of questioning, feedback, and experimentation (Rus et al., 2014).

Team Learning and collaboration, represents the cooperation skills between the employees in using resources effectively as a team (Yang et al., 2004). Also, team learning includes encouraging cooperation, learning and working together and provide culture of teamwork in the organization (Leufvén et al., 2015).

Embedded System, indicates systems establishment to capture and share learning within organization (Tafvelin et al., 2017). This dimension focused on organization's ability to keep what is learned for using during ongoing changes (Lim, 2010).

Employee Empowerment, means the process of creating and sharing a collective vision and gathering information about the gap between the current status and the new vision (Hussein et al., 2016).

System Connection, includes thinking and actions from global perspective for linking the organization to its internal and external business environment (Dekoulou and Trivellas, 2015).

Strategic Leadership, notes if leaders think strategically about using learning to create and manage change and moving the organization towards new markets (Yang et al., 2004). Additionally, strategic Leadership is the using of learning as a strategic tool to achieve required organizational objectives (Dekoulou and Trivellas, 2015).

Questionnaire was handed out to a randomly selected sample of 250 employees in the Egyptian travel agencies – category A – in the greater Cairo, whereas 216 were retrieved which represent 86.4% of the total. The researcher used the Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS. V.22) to analyze data. The statistics techniques used in data analysis include Cronbach alpha to assess the reliability, frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation, Mann-Whitney test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to test the differences among demographics with regard to the other variables (gender, position and work experience). Mann-Whitney was used to compare two independent samples only, while Kruskal-Wallis was utilized to compare three or more groups.

Nunnally (1978) revealed that, in most social science research, reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered "acceptable" (Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach Alpha reliability was computed for the seven dimensions of learning organization and the test depicted that the reliability coefficients for all dimensions were above 0.830 which indicates that the instrument is reliable for being used.

4. Results and Discussion:

A) Demographic and other work related information:

Table 1. Demographic and work information

Demographic and work information		Freq.	%
Gender	Male	192	88.9
	Female	24	11.1
Age	Less than 25 years	26	12
	25-34 year	92	42.6
	35-44 year	84	38.9
	45-55 year	11	5.1
	More than 55 years	3	1.4
Education	Bachelor	202	93.5
	Diploma	3	1.4
	Master	8	3.7
	Other	3	1.4
Position	Manager	15	6.9
	Tourism manager	17	7.9
	Marketing manager	13	6
	Aviation manager	26	12
	Human resources manager	8	3.7
	Religious tourism manager	28	13
	Other	109	50.5
Job experience	Less than 5 years	77	35.6
	5-10 years	79	36.6
	11-15 years	44	20.4
	More than 15 years	16	7.4
Total		216	100%

Source: Results from SPSS V.22

Table (1) showed that, out of 216 respondents, 192 (88.9%) were males, while 24 (11.1%) of them were females. 12% of respondents were less than 25 years, while 42.6% were between 25 and 34 years, and 38.9% of them were between 35 and 44 years. The majority of respondents (93.5%) had a bachelor. Regarding respondents' position, 50.5% of employees work in different jobs within the Egyptian travel agencies – category A – such as transferman, tour leader, tour operator, reservation, customer service and traffic manager, while 13% of them worked as religious tourism manager, and 12% worked as aviation manager. 36.6% of employees had work experience between 5 and 10 years, while 35.6 % of them had work experience less than 5 years, and 20.4% had work experience between 11 and 15 years.

B) Learning Organization Dimensions

Table 2. Learning Organization Dimensions in the Egyptian travel agencies

Items		5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
Dimension 1: Continuous learning							3.33	1.42
In my organization, people help each other learn.	Freq.	89	71	2	24	30	3.76	1.44
	%	41.2	32.9	0.9	11.1	13.9		
In my organization, people are given time to support learning.	Freq.	71	68	5	43	29	3.50	1.46
	%	32.9	31.5	2.3	19.9	13.4		
In my organization, people are rewarded for learning.	Freq.	39	55	2	48	72	2.73	1.57
	%	18.1	25.5	0.9	22.2	33.3		
Dimension 2: Dialogue and inquiry							3.80	1.26
In my organization, people give open and honest feedback to each other.	Freq.	82	84	3	26	21	3.83	1.32
	%	38	38.9	1.4	12	9.7		

In my organization, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think.	Freq.	55	97	5	32	27	3.56	1.35
	%	25.5	44.9	2.3	14.8	12.5		
In my organization, people spend time building trust with each other.	Freq.	96	80	7	14	19	4.02	1.24
	%	44.4	37	3.2	6.5	8.9		
Dimension 3: Team learning and collaboration							3.76	1.37
In my organization, teams /groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed.	Freq.	92	67	3	23	31	3.77	1.45
	%	42.6	31	1.4	10.6	14.4		
In my organization, teams /groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or information collected	Freq.	85	76	2	34	19	3.81	1.34
	%	39.4	35.2	0.9	15.7	8.8		
In my organization, teams /groups are confident that the organization will act as their recommendations.	Freq.	72	87	5	28	24	3.72	1.34
	%	33.3	40.3	2.3	13	11.1		
Dimension 4: Embedded systems							3.68	1.36
My organization creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance	Freq.	63	84	6	23	40	3.50	1.47
	%	29.2	38.9	2.8	10.6	18.5		
My organization makes its lessons learned available to	Freq.	81	73	5	32	25	3.71	1.40

all employees	%	37.5	33.8	2.3	14.8	11.6		
My organization measures the results of the time and resources spent on training.	Freq.	77	89	4	27	19	3.82	1.28
	%	35.6	41.2	1.9	12.5	8.8		
Dimension 5: Empowerment							3.81	1.32
My organization recognizes people for taking initiatives	Freq.	75	89	7	17	28	3.77	1.35
	%	34.7	41.2	3.2	7.9	13		
My organization gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work	Freq.	83	78	3	28	24	3.78	1.37
	%	38.4	36.1	1.4	13	11.1		
My organization supports employees who take calculated risks.	Freq.	88	76	5	33	14	3.88	1.27
	%	40.7	35.2	2.3	15.3	6.5		
Dimension 6: Systems connections							4.16	1.01
My organization encourages people to think from a global perspective.	Freq.	102	88	4	14	8	4.21	1.02
	%	47.2	40.7	1.9	6.5	3.7		
My organization works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.	Freq.	87	99	2	16	12	4.08	1.10
	%	40.3	45.8	0.9	7.4	5.6		

My organization encourages people to get answers from across the organization when solving problems.	Freq.	98	93	5	9	11	4.19	1.03
	%	45.4	43.1	2.3	4.1	5.1		
Dimension 7: Strategic leadership							4.34	.96
In my organization, leaders mentor and coach those they lead	Freq.	134	68	3	3	8	4.47	.90
	%	62	31.5	1.4	1.4	3.7		
In my organization, leaders continually look for opportunities to learn	Freq.	116	72	4	13	11	4.25	1.10
	%	53.7	33.3	1.9	6	5.1		
In my organization, leaders ensure that the organization's actions are consistent with its values	Freq.	111	82	7	9	7	4.30	.95
	%	51.4	38	3.2	4.2	3.2		
Total mean and standard deviation							3.84	1.20

Source: Results from SPSS V.22

Table (2) depicts the availability of characteristics and dimensions of learning organizations in the Egyptian travel agencies – Category A, where the mean is 3.84, and the standard deviation 1.20. The seventh dimension (**strategic leadership**) has the first rank in term of availability in the Egyptian travel agencies (mean= 4.34 & SD= 0.96), then the sixth dimension (**systems connections**) (mean= 4.16 & SD= 1.01), followed by the fifth dimension (**empowerment**) (mean= 3.81 & SD= 1.32), then after that the second dimension (**dialogue and inquiry**) (mean= 3.80 & SD= 1.26), then the third dimension (**team learning and collaboration**) (mean= 3.76 & SD= 1.37), followed by the fourth dimension (**embedded systems**)

(mean= 3.68 & SD= 1.36) and finally in the last rank; the first dimension (**continuous learning**) came (mean= 3.33 & SD= 1.42).

In some detail; employees help each other learn within travel agencies (mean= 3.76 & SD= 1.44), and these agencies give employees the chance and time to learn (mean= 3.50 & SD= 1.46). But 55.5% of respondents reported that, no rewards presented these agencies to employees who seek to learn (mean= 2.73 & SD= 1.57). The mean of continuous learning dimensions in travel agencies was 3.33 and the standard deviation was 1.42. This result indicates the relative interest of travel agencies – category A to support the learning of employees and to develop their knowledge and experience.

In the context of travel agencies seeking to dialogue and discuss with employees to identify their views and construct a strong confidence among them; there is transparency and integrity in these agencies by providing a clear feedback to all employees in the same time (mean= 3.83, SD= 1.32), Besides, employees seeking to know what others think after presenting their ideas (mean= 3.56, SD= 1.35). Moreover, for strong relations, employees spend time to construct trust with others within agencies (mean= 4.02, SD= 1.24). The mean of dialogue and inquiry dimension in travel agencies was 3.80 and the standard deviation was 1.26. This result confirmed that, travel agencies focus on dialogue and discussion with employees to know their views and suggestions and the potentiality of building trust.

Regarding to travel agencies' supporting for employees and encouraging them to cooperate and work as a team; employees have a freedom to achieve their objectives as they want (mean= 3.77, SD= 1.45), and teams review and refine ideas and suggestions after group discussion and information gathering (mean= 3.81, SD= 1.34). Additionally, employees make sure that agencies implement their recommendations (mean= 3.72, SD= 1.34). The mean of team learning and collaboration dimension in travel agencies was 3.76 and the standard deviation was 1.37. This result revealed that, these agencies continuously encourage employees to work as a team, team learning and more cooperation for agencies' success.

As travel agencies seek to improve performance; it sets a system for measuring the gap between the current and expected performance to identify obstacles affecting the current performance and non-arrival to expected performance (mean= 3.50, SD= 1.47). Information and learning lessons are available for all employees to learn from them (mean= 3.71, SD= 1.40). Travel agencies also focus on returns of training on improving employees and agencies' performance (mean= 3.82, SD= 1.28). The mean of embedded systems dimension in travel agencies was 3.68, and the standard deviation was 1.36, which clarify the interest of these agencies to achieve optimal performance, and training programs evaluation on an ongoing basis to increase the returns of these programs.

In terms of empowering employees in travel agencies; these agencies appreciate employees for taking initiatives (mean= 3.77, SD= 1.35), besides, supporting them to control over resources required to perform their work and achieve their objectives (mean= 3.78, SD= 1.37) and promoting employees who taking risks (mean= 3.88, SD= 1.27). The mean of empowerment dimension in travel agencies was 3.81 and the standard deviation was 1.32, which reflect the attitude of travel agencies to empower their employees through encourage them to take initiatives, take risks and give them a freedom in the way of achieving their objectives.

From the results of globalization, including the opening markets and global competition; travel agencies encourage their employees to think from global view, and how to exploit available chances for their agencies (mean= 4.21, SD= 1.02), alongside integration and work to meet and satisfy the needs of the outside community (mean= 4.08, SD= 1.10). Moreover, these agencies emphasize employees to rely on accurate information in solving problems (mean= 4.19, SD= 1.03). The mean of systems connections dimension in travel agencies was 4.16 and the standard deviation was 1.01, which demonstrate the attitude of travel agencies to work and compete in global business environment and provide services and products that fulfill outside community's desires. Additionally, depending on accurate and sufficient information in solving problems.

In the light of global attitude to strategic planning, strategic management, long-term planning and strategic leadership; We find that, travel agencies' managers monitor and follow up employees effectively and continuously to make sure that the work goes according to plan (mean= 4.47, SD= 0.90). Managers also search for learning chances and exploit them (mean= 4.25, SD= 1.10). Moreover, managers make sure that practices and actions of agencies are compatible with its values and organizational culture (mean= 4.30, SD= 0.96). The mean of strategic leadership dimension in travel agencies was 4.34 and the standard deviation was 0.95 that highlight the strategic perspective and orientation of the management of these agencies and strategically and effectively think to achieve competitive advantage.

Table 3. The differences among gender with regard to learning organization according to Mann-Whitney test

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>	<i>Wilcoxon W</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Learning organization	Male	192	113.85	1.276	1.576	-3.574	0.137
	Female	24	65.76				

Source: Results from SPSS V.22

As showed in table (3) there is no significant differences between gender and learning organization where the p values for all of them were above .05.

Table 4. The differences among position and work experience with regard to learning organization according to Kruskal-Wallis test

			<i>N</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Learning organization	Position	Manager	15	197.00	185.405	.238
		Tourism manager	17	197.00		
		Marketing manager	13	184.31		
		Aviation manager	26	159.65		
		Human resources manager	8	141.25		
		Religious tourism	28	123.21		

		manager				
		Other	109	55.09		
Learning organization	Work experience	Less than 5 years	77	178.00	194.220	.192
		5-10 years	79	99.89		
		11-15 years	44	38.52		
		More than 15 years	16	8.50		

Source: Results from SPSS V.22

As showed in table (3) there is no significant differences between position and work experience and learning organization where the p values for all of them were above 05.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations:

Learning organizations focus on continuous improvement and development in employees' knowledge and expertise and encourage managers to learn. Learning organizations are those organizations that constantly seek to learn, exploit opportunities, achieve goals and thus achieve a competitive advantage. It is also one of the hallmarks of today's business environment. Availability of learning organization characteristics in travel agencies help them adapting with changes in labor market. The prime objective of this study was to answer the following question: To what extent the Egyptian travel agencies have the characteristics of the learning organizations?. The results of this study concluded that, travel agencies – category A in greater Cairo have the learning organizations' characteristics. The results also revealed the availability of the seventh dimensions of learning organizations in travel agencies – category A at varying levels but close. Based on these results, Egyptian travel agencies – category A in greater Cairo are considered as learning organizations.

Although the availability of characteristics and dimensions of learning organizations in travel agencies are evident, there are some recommendations in order to make these characteristics more available within these agencies. These recommendations are:

- Considering learning the base of work and success on intensive competitive business environment and it is a continuous and effective process to achieve the competitive advantage;
- Encouraging, motivating and rewarding employees who seek to learn.
- Encouraging employees to create and share knowledge;
- More empowerment for employees in decision making and the necessity of employees' participation in travel agencies management;
- Providing feedback to employees about performance evaluation and giving recommendations to treat deficiencies in performance;
- Motivating employees to think from strategic and global perspectives continuously;
- Searching for different thinking ways that improve decision making process and create ideas and suggestions to develop travel agencies;
- Providing effective, flexible and simple communication system within travel agencies;
- Rewarding employees for continuous looking for new information in business environment.

6. Area of Further Studies:

This study focused on discovering the extent to which the Egyptian travel agencies have the characteristics of the learning organizations. Further studies are needed to discuss the factors affecting the availability of these characteristics. Future research should discuss the relationship between some variables such as strategic planning, human resources management practices, organizational culture and learning organization dimensions in travel agencies. To identify the importance of these characteristics, further studies can be conducted to determine the impact of these characteristics on some organizational variables such as performance, job satisfaction, commitment, innovation and customer service. All of this would give a clear and comprehensive perceptions about the role of learning organization characteristics in travel agencies.

7. References

- Abbasi, A. P. D. E., Taqipour, M., & Farhadian, A. P. D. H. (2012). Learning Organization Discipline in Iranian Higher Education System. *of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*, 2(2), pp. 58-68.
- Abdullah, K. A. S., & Kassim, N. A. (2008). Perceptions of organizational learning practices among Yemeni university librarians. *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*, 13(1), pp. 77-90.
- Akgün, A. E., İmamoğlu, S. Z., Koçoğlu, İ., İnce, H., & Keskin, H. (2014). Bridging organizational learning capability and firm performance through customer relationship management. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 150, pp. 531-540.
- Alas, R., Zernand-Vilson, M., & Vadi, M. (2012). Management techniques in Estonian organizations: learning organization and business process reengineering. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 62, pp. 494-498.
- Alipour, F., Idris, K., & Karimi, R. (2011). Knowledge creation and transfer: Role of learning organization. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 2(3), pp. 61-67.
- Balay, R. (2012). Effect of Learning Organization Perception to the Organizational Commitment: A Comparison between Private and Public University. *Educational sciences: Theory and practice*, 12(4), pp. 2474-2486.
- Brazdauskas, M., & Gaigalaite, L. (2015). Sustainable Hotels as Learning Organizations: Innovative Approaches towards Employee Training. *Innovation*, 1, pp. 99-106.
- Chan, C. C., & Scott-Ladd, B. (2004). Organisational learning: Some considerations for human resource practitioners. *Asia Pacific journal of human resources*, 42(3), pp. 336-347.
- Dararat, S., & Taechamaneestit, T. (2015). Organization Development Toward Learning Organization in a Private University. *International Journal of Cyber Society and Education*, 8(1), pp. 19-30.

- Davis, D., & Daley, B. J. (2008). The learning organization and its dimensions as key factors in firms' performance. *Human Resource Development International*, 11(1), pp. 51-66.
- Dekoulou, P., & Trivellas, P. (2014). Learning Organization in Greek Advertising and Media Industry: A way to face crisis and gain sustainable competitive advantage. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, pp. 367-375.
- Dicle, Ü., & Köse, C. (2014). The impact of organizational learning on corporate sustainability and strategy formulation with the moderating effect of industry type. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 150, pp. 958-967.
- Ellinger, A. D., Ellinger, A. E., Yang, B., & Howton, S. W. (2002). The relationship between the learning organization concept and firms' financial performance: An empirical assessment. *Human resource development quarterly*, 13(1), pp. 5-21.
- Farrukh, M., & Waheed, A. (2015). Learning organization and competitive advantage-An integrated approach. *Journal of Asian Business Strategy*, 5(4), pp. 73-79.
- Gagnon, M. P., Payne-Gagnon, J., Fortin, J. P., Paré, G., Côté, J., & Courcy, F. (2015). A learning organization in the service of knowledge management among nurses: A case study. *International Journal of Information Management*, 35(5), pp. 636-642.
- Gandolfi, F. (2006). Can a school organization be transformed into a learning organization?. *Contemporary Management Research*, 2(1), pp. 57-72.
- Goh, S. C. (2003). Improving organizational learning capability: lessons from two case studies. *The learning organization*, 10(4), pp. 216-227.
- Haeffner, M., Leone, D., Coons, L., & Chermack, T. (2012). The effects of scenario planning on participant perceptions of learning organization characteristics. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 23(4), pp. 519-542.

- H Hanaysha, J. (2016). Testing the effects of employee engagement, work environment, and organizational learning on organizational commitment. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 229, pp. 289-297.
- Hsiao, L. H. (2011). Key successful factors of learning organization in kaoshiung city government. *Pakistan Journal of Statistics*, 27(5), pp. 733-740.
- Hussein, N., Omar, S., Noordin, F., & Ishak, N. A. (2016). Learning organization culture, organizational performance and organizational innovativeness in a public institution of higher education in Malaysia: A preliminary study. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 37, pp. 512-519.
- Jyothibabu, C., Farooq, A., & Bhusan Pradhan, B. (2010). An integrated scale for measuring an organizational learning system. *The Learning Organization*, 17(4), pp. 303-327.
- Kalmuk, G., & Acar, A. (2015). The Mediating Role of Organizational Learning Capability On The Relationship Between Innovation and Firm's Performance: A Conceptual Framework. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 210, pp. 164-169.
- Khasawneh, S. (2011). Learning organization disciplines in higher education institutions: An approach to human resource development in Jordan. *Innovative Higher Education*, 36(4), pp. 273-285.
- Kontoghiorghes, C., Awbre, S. M., & Feurig, P. L. (2005). Examining the relationship between learning organization characteristics and change adaptation, innovation, and organizational performance. *Human resource development quarterly*, 16(2), pp. 185-211.
- Korth, K. (2007). Re-establishing the importance of the learning organization. *Automotive Design and Production*, 19(11), pp. 12-15.
- Kraleva, N. (2011). Learning organizations: Prerequisite for successful tourism organizations. *UTMS Journal of Economics*, 2(1), pp. 77-82.
- Kumar, A. K. (2015). Faculty's Self-Leadership and Organizational Identification in Promoting Universities as Learning Organizations. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1 S1), pp. 35-41.

- Kuşçu, Z. K., Yener, M., & Gürbüz, F. G. (2015). Learning organization and its cultural manifestations: Evidence from a global white goods manufacturer. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 210, pp. 154-163.
- Lazarová, B., Pol, M., Hloušková, L., Novotný, P., & Sedláček, M. (2013). Support for organizational learning in Czech basic schools. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, pp. 302-307.
- Leufvén, M., Vitrakoti, R., Bergström, A., Ashish, K. C., & Målvqvist, M. (2015). Dimensions of Learning Organizations Questionnaire (DLOQ) in a low-resource health care setting in Nepal. *Health research policy and systems*, 13(1), pp. 1-8.
- Lien, B., Yu-Yuan Hung, R., Yang, B., & Li, M. (2006). Is the learning organization a valid concept in the Taiwanese context?. *International Journal of Manpower*, 27(2), pp. 189-203.
- Lim, T. (2010). Relationships among organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and learning organization culture in one Korean private organization. *Asia Pacific education review*, 11(3), pp. 311-320.
- Maden, C. (2012). Transforming public organizations into learning organizations: a conceptual model. *Public Organization Review*, 12(1), pp. 71-84.
- Mirkamali, S. M., Thani, F. N., & Alami, F. (2011). Examining the role of transformational leadership and job satisfaction in the organizational learning of an automotive manufacturing company. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 29, pp. 138-148.
- Najafbagy, R., & Doroudi, H. (2010). Model of Learning Organization in Broadcasting Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran. *Serbian Journal of Management*, 5(2), pp. 213-225.
- Nakpodia, E. (2009). The Concept of the University as Learning Organization: Its Functions, Techniques and Possible Ways of Making it Effective. *Journal of public administration and policy research*, 1(5), pp. 79-83.
- Nazem, F., & Mozaiini, M. (2014). Validation Scale for Measuring Organizational Learning in Higher Educational Institutes. *European Journal of Experimental Biology*, 4(1), pp. 21-27.

- Nejad, B., Abbaszadeh, M., Hassani, M., & Bernousi, I. (2012). Study of the Entrepreneurship in Universities as Learning Organization Based on Senge Model. *International Education Studies*, 5(1), pp. 67-77.
- Nunnally. (1978). *Psychometric Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Onağ, A.; Tepeci, M. and Başalp, A. (2014) Organizational Learning Capability and its Impact on Firm Innovativeness. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 150, pp. 708-717.
- Ponnuswamy, I., & Manohar, H. (2016). Impact of Learning Organization Culture on Performance in Higher Education Institutions. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(1), pp. 21-36.
- Prelipean, G., & Bejinaru, R. (2016). Universities as Learning Organizations in the Knowledge Economy. *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy*, 4(4), pp. 469-492.
- Recepoğlu, E. (2013). Analyzing Teachers' Perceptions on Learning Organizations in Terms of Different Variables. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, pp. 618-623.
- Rus, C., Chirică, S., Rațiu, L., & Băban, A. (2014). Learning Organization and Social Responsibility in Romanian Higher Education Institutions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 142, pp. 146-153.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning*. New York: Doubleday.
- Singh, K. (2010). An Analysis of Relationship between the Learning Organization and Organization Culture in Indian Business Organization. *Organizations and Markets in Emerging Economies*, 1(1), pp. 1-24.
- Song, J., Joo, B., & Chermack, T. (2009). The Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ): A Validation Study in a Korean Context. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 20(1), pp. 43-64.
- S Sudharatna, Y., & Li, L. (2004). Learning Organization Characteristics Contributed to its Readiness-to-Change: A Study of the Thai Mobile Phone Service Industry. *Managing Global Transitions*, 2(2), pp. 163-178.

- Tafvelin, S., Schwarz, U., & Hasson, H. (2017). In Agreement? Leader-Team Perceptual Distance in Organizational Learning Affects Work Performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 75, pp. 1-7.
- Thepthea, N., & Mitsufuji, T. (2016). Knowledge Process and Learning Organization Development in Science Museums. *Procedia Computer Science*, 99, pp. 157-170.
- Vargas, M. (2015). Determinant Factors for Small Business to Achieve Innovation, High Performance and Competitiveness: Organizational Learning and Leadership Style. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 169, pp. 43-52.
- Vatankhah, M., Pakdel, A., Noruzi, L., Mahmudi, A., & Vatankhah, G. (2011). Surveying of Learning Organization Indices and Academic Quality Improvement in Islamic Azad Universities. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(5), pp. 861-875.
- Watkins and Marsick. (1997). *Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (Survey)*. Warwick: RI: Partners for the Learning Organization.
- Watkins and Marsick. (1993). *Sculpting the Learning Organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Yang, B., Watkins, K., & Marsick, V. (2004). The Construct of the Learning Organization: Dimensions, Measurement, and Validation. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 15(1), pp. 31-55.
- Yaşlıoğlu, M., Şap, Ö., & Toplu, D. (2014). An Investigation of the Characteristics of Learning Organizations in Turkish Companies: Scale Validation. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 150, pp. 726-734.
- Yeung, A., Lai, K., & Yee, R. (2006). Organizational Learning, Innovativeness, and Organizational Performance: A Qualitative Investigation. *International Journal of Production Research*, 45(11), pp. 2459–2477.