

Investigate the Relationship of Learning Orientation with Innovation and Organizational Performance of SMEs in the Province of Kurdistan, Iran (Case Study: Food Industry)

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ABSTRACT: The ability to learn a vital factor for the organization to grow and be an innovator. The importance of innovation to survive of organization in changing environment generally is accepted by everyone. Among these organizations will be successful, that can achieve success and sustainable growth with identify their success factors in times of crisis. Organizational backgrounds show that organizational learning plays a vital role in the development of companies and increase the potential for innovation and performance. In this study, the relationship between organizational learning and innovation and organizational performance and led to the conclusion that organizational learning how effects on innovation and organizational performance. Various models have been proposed in the research literature that has been created by statistical data obtained from the companies. The proposed model, of the project has three aspects including: organizational commitment to learning, open-mindedness and common vision and is measured by 20 items. Scales by the results, from data collected from 246 food industry sub Industrial Estates Kurdistan province have been valid. 152 valid questionnaires were collected and to test the research model used spss software. As a result, the proposed scale provide, useful information for managers to increase organizational learning in their organizations and the results showed that organizational learning is a significant positive effect on innovation and organizational performance.

Key words: organizational learning, organizational innovation, organizational performance, food industry

I. INTRODUCTION

Many changes and challenges of today's world requires that form organization with ability to learn and to update itself so that it can adjust to the rapid changes and timely response to environmental stimuli and by acquiring knowledge and awareness in widespread and dynamic and alive form in the field of organizational improvement and development continue its survive. Organizational learning is also a vital source to obtain competitive advantage in strategic management. And should be seen organizational knowledge as a strategic asset in the organization and managed it in a way to improve performance and competitive position of organization. So many of writers know learning as one of vital aspects of competitiveness and related it with acquisition of knowledge and organizational performance (Allame 2011).

Problem statement

Many experts introducing believe innovation and differentiating as a undeniable necessity and believe innovation led to the firm's competitive advantage in internal and external markets and an essential element for the long-term survival of the organization and is an integral part of strategy of organization. For this purpose, learning is seen as stimulating of innovation and considering the importance of innovation in developing countries is considered as a fundamental issue by strategic planners. Considering the importance of innovation to transform new knowledge into new products and services it is better to do more research on the effect of learning on innovation. Learning orientation considered because of the development of organizational insight and make fields of innovation and known as the introduction create a culture that is conducive to innovation and effect on it. In relation to the learning orientation and innovation can be said that appropriate learning environment where the organization can use of all sources and activities to the market orientation and innovation in that environment (Matofi 2011).

The importance of research

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect of learning orientation on innovation and organizational performance in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province. This research involves three aspects of

to learning which has aspects (organizational commitment to learning, open-mindedness, shared vision) and innovation and organizational performance, including (market share, the percentage of new product sales to total sales and return on investment). Some want to measure the impact of these elements on the small and medium industries in Kurdistan province. Learning not be separated from everyday activities of the organization. Managers should learn how to transfer knowledge to the organization and learn the ways in which people in the organization can gain useful and practical information through it. And application of knowledge will be useful to guide the process, structures and organizational activities leading to improved performance and business. So learning is considered as one of the vital aspects of competitiveness and related with acquisition of knowledge and organizational performance.

Innovation is as the most important factor in the performance and survival of the organization, in assessing the competitive environment. Innovations include the successful implementation of creative ideas and opinions within the organization. Innovation as well as group and individual learning processes which aims to finding new ways to solve problems in the organization and as a result of innovations in the organization to learning ability of the organization to learn through new knowledge which developed and in organization published and used.

The development of learning in its various forms known as an important factor in economic success and one of the most important indicators of the performance of organizations and innovation is known as a driving force in the development of companies and improve performance. And power of innovation is the defining characteristic of performance.

The necessity of the research

Organizations previously lived in a stable environment and future events were almost predictable. So that managers could plan in sure conditions. But nowadays environment is changing rapidly. Increased competition and complexity of the business space is one of the characteristics of modern commerce. Rapid and significant changes in various areas of science and technology increasingly affect the process of human society. So that traditional organizations are not able to coordinate with these changes and the only organizations have chances of survival, which is able to continuously adapt to changes in the surrounding environment. Organizations with rapid learning from the successes and failures will be able when dealing with different situations have effective behaviors and in this way they will achieve their goals with maximum effectiveness. Learning Organization is a phenomenon that emerged by starting 90s. Cause of the emergence of such organizations has been conditions, and changes and developments before the decade. For the organizations maintain in this turbulent environment, should be removed from static forms and be transformed into a learning organization. All organizations learn. This means that they are compatible with the changing world around them. But some organizations learn faster and more effective. The most important point is that we do not separate learning from every day work (Sehat 2009).

The research goals

The first General Objectives

Recognizing the relationship between learning orientation and innovation in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province
 Specific Objectives
 1. Recognizing the relationship between organizational commitment to learning and organizational innovation in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province.
 2. There is a relationship between elements of open-mindedness and organizational innovation.
 3. Recognizing the relationship between the element of common insight and organizational innovation in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province.

The second General Objectives

Recognizing the relationship between innovation and organizational performance in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province
 Specific objectives
 1. Recognizing the relationship between the elements of innovation and market share in the small and medium industries in Kurdistan province
 2. Recognizing the relationship between the elements of innovation and the percentage of new product sales to total sales in the small and medium industries in Kurdistan province.
 3. Recognizing the relationship between the elements of innovation and return investment in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province
 The third General Objectives: Recognizing the relationship between learning orientation and organizational performance in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province
 Specific objectives
 1. Recognizing the relationship between the elements of the organization's commitment to learning and organizational performance in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province
 2. Recognizing the relationship between the elements of an open mind and organizational performance in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province

3. Recognizing the relationship between the elements shared vision and organizational performance in small and medium industries in Kurdistan province

Table I: external research literature

Row	Subject	Author	Year of publication	Conclusion
1	The relationship between individual skills and organizational learning	Koulen	1999	Organizational learning arises from individual skills
2	The relationship of Systems thinking and individual skill	Flood	1998	creates the positive relationship between systems thinking and personal skills and creating motivation in people .
3	Studying the relationship between individual skills on learning	Thomas	1994	Organizational learning arises from individual skills and there is a positive relationship between them.
4	Studying the relationship of innovation and organizational performance	Volvaf	2002	Avoiding from innovation has a negative impact on organizational performance.
5	study the relationship of individual skills and organizational learning and innovation	Garvin	2000	Operating effectiveness of an organization is required to upgrade the skill level of individual employees.
6	Study of organizational learning	Argyris and Schon	1995	Learning is discovery and correction of error
7	Model of the learning process to achieve continuous development and innovation	Bio Boukler	1996	Organizations need to learn to succeed in a turbulent environment.
8	The relationship between knowledge management and organizational learning and innovation	Suan Liao	2008	There is a positive and significant relationship between these three components.
9	study the relationship between total quality management, organizational learning and performance of innovation in organization	Belaya and Richard	2011	There was a significant and positive relationship between these three components.

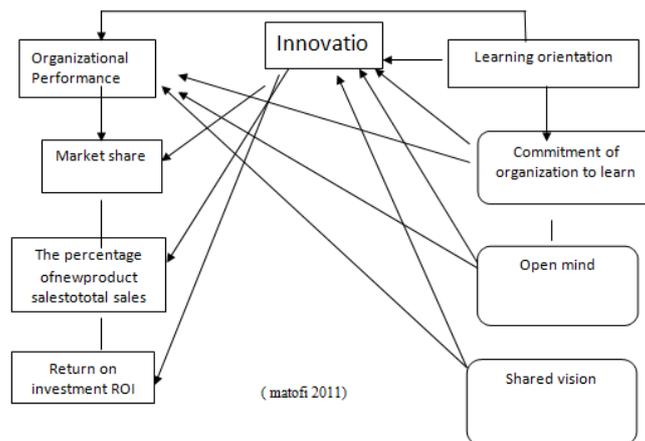
Table II: internal research literature

Row	Subject	Author	Year of publication	Conclusion
1	study the relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management	Maryam Yaghoubi et al.	2009	There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management
2	Study of, knowledge management and organizational learning in Tehran city	Elham Mir Esmaili	2007	There is a difference between organizational learning and knowledge management in the intelligent and normal schools
3	study the relationship between organizational learning and organizational innovation	Yousra Salehi	2012	There is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning and innovation
4	study the effect of organizational learning capabilities and organizational performance	Ali Mollahoseini	2010	All aspects of organizational learning has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance
5	Studying the relationship of organizational intelligence and organizational learning	Younes Gholami et al.	2009	All aspects of organization intelligence with organizational learning has a positive and significant relationship
6	Study of organizational learning and factors affecting on it	Somayeh Alavi	2010	Internal and external organization factors have a significant positive effect on organizational learning

7	study factors affecting on organizational learning	Syed Ghavam, Hashemi	2006	These factors are includesystemic thinking and learning, mental models, shared vision and aspirations, skills and experiential personal domination
8	study the role of orientation to learning on innovation and organizational performance	Alireza Matoufi and et al.	2010	learning orientation in small companies has a direct effect on innovation and organizational performance

Theoretical framework

learning is including dimensions: (commitment of organization to learning, open-mindedness and shared vision). Performance is including dimensions (market share the percentage of new product sales to total sales and return on investment ROI (Matofi 2011).



Research

the first of main

hypotheses
Hypothesis:

There is relationship between learning orientation and innovation

Sub-hypotheses:

1. There is relationship between organization's commitment to learning and organizational innovation.
2. There is relationship between element of open-mindedness and organizational innovation.
3. There is relationship between element of shared vision and organizational innovation.

The second of

main hypotheses:

There is a relationship between innovation and organizational performance.

1. There is a relationship between elements of innovation and market share
2. There is a relationship between element of innovation and the percentage of new product sales to total sales.
3. There is a relationship between elements of innovation and return on investment.

The third of

main hypotheses:

There is a relationship between learning orientation and organizational performance

Sub-hypotheses

1. There is a relationship between element of commitment of organization to learning and organizational performance
2. There is a relationship between element of open-mindedness and organizational performance.
3. There is a relationship between element of shared vision and organizational performance.

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is descriptive survey. On the basis of how to obtain the required data according to classified research according to their purpose is descriptive research. In terms of monitoring and control degree this study is field research, because the researcher examines the variables in their natural state. And as this research shows how companies can apply organizational learning strategy for innovation and performance of the organization and successfully in a competitive environment will be applications. The aim of applied research is the development of applied knowledge in a specific field. Applied research applies attention of researchers and consultants to study their favorite problem to find practical solutions to correct problematic situation (skaran 2002).

Domain of the Research

the domain of study is mentioned usually in three dimensions including time, place and subject matter. In this study the following three areas are introduced and explained:

- Research time domain: Due to the time domain of this study was conducted in a range of one-year in 2013.

- Research Geographic domain:

Research geographic domain, include SME in the province of Kurdistan that includes 246 active companies is obtained 152 companies using Cochran model.

- Research subject domain:

From the conceptual perspective this study also examines the relationship between learning orientation with innovation and organizational performance.

Method for data collection:

In this study for collecting and compiling research literature is used library method. Also questionnaire used for gathering data from managers. In fact, the information required in two parts library, to collect information on the literature of the subject, and in the field to collect data used from questionnaires.

In this study, questionnaire used for data collection, from managers based on standardized questionnaire is developed based on the Likert scale in five option form from strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5.

Statistical analysis methods of data

Using descriptive statistics with the help of Microsoft Excel for evaluation of central characteristics and set the statistical frequency tables. Inferential statistics (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis. In this study, to analyze the data by using software SPSS used statistical test of multiple regression analysis. Technical specifications for measurement tools Validity: Since the standard questionnaire for determining the validity have been used from teachers and experts and determined content and face validity.

Reliability

In this study to obtain the reliability of questionnaire has been used Cronbach's alpha coefficient for pre-test. In this way before final implementation were randomly selected 30 samples, then questionnaires were given to them and using the data obtained from the questionnaire and helping SPSS software reliability coefficient was calculated with Cronbach's alpha. That is presented in the following table. As can be seen Cronbach's alpha is higher than 0.7, indicating that the stability and internal consistency of questionnaire.

Table III: The Cronbach's alpha of questionnaire of learning orientation and innovation and organizational performance

Row	Variable	The number of questions	Cronbach's alpha	Total factor
1	Organizational commitment to learning	4	.757	0/925
2	Open-mindedness	4	0/853	
3	Shared vision	4	0/855	
	Innovation	5	.712	.712
Organizational Performance	Market share	1	.712	.792
	The percentage of new product sale to total sales	1	.782	
	Return on investment	1	.729	

Table IV: Descriptive statistical analysis

		Number	Percent
Gender	Male	8	5.3
	Female	144	94.7
Age	Less than 25 years	0	0
	25-35	38	0.25
	36-45	56	36.8
	46-55	45	29.6
	More than 55 years	13	8.6
Education	University student	18	11.8
	BS	72	47.4
	MA	56	36.8
	PhD	6	3.9
job experience	Less than a year	1	4.6
	1-3	28	18.4
	4-8	111	73.0
	9-15	6	3.9

Inferential statistics and hypothesis testing: study normality assumption of data by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S):

H_0 : Data of variable is not normally distributed
 H_1 : Data of variable is normally distributed

Table V: test result of normality of dependent and independent variables

Factor	The significance level	Hypothesis confirmation	Conclusion
learning orientation	.154	H0	Normal
Organizational commitment to learning	.083	H0	Normal
Open-mindedness	.083	H0	Normal
Shared vision	.26	H0	Normal
Innovation	.09	H0	Normal
Performance	.094	H0	Normal

According to the results of the table, these variables were normally distributed and to test the hypothesis used of parametric tests

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Pearson correlation	Significance level	Relationship
The relationship between learning orientation and organizational innovation	.210	0/005	Has
The relationship between commitment to learning and innovation	.208	0/005	Has
The relationship between open-mindedness and innovation	.208	.005	Has
The relationship between shared vision and innovation	.207	0/18	Has
The relationship between innovation and organizational performance	0/203	0/006	Has
The relationship between innovation and market share	0/167	0/020	Has
The relationship between innovation and the proportion of sales	0/119	0/072	Has
The relationship between innovation and return on investment	0/121	0/069	Has
The relationship between learning orientation and organizational performance	0/906	0/00	Has
The relationship between learning orientation and market share	0/606	0/00	Has
The relationship between learning orientation and the proportion of sales	0/661	0/00	Has
The relationship between learning orientation and return on investment	0/548	0/00	Has

According to the results of table (14) and the significant level that it is amount $\text{sig} < 0/05$. There was a significant relationship between learning orientation and organizational innovation and the main hypotheses confirmed.

Also, due to the significant level of relationship is between aspects of learning orientation that includes a commitment to learning, open-mindedness and shared vision with organizational innovation. Also there is a significant relationship between organizational performance and innovation and between innovation and the market share. Also, due to significant level there is a positive and significant relationship between learning orientation and organizational performance and dimensions of that. But the relationship between innovation and proportion of sales and return on investment due to the larger the significant level of 0.05 is not significant.

Friedman test to evaluate and compare the dimensions of learning and organizational innovation:

Table VII: significantly Friedman test about prioritization aspects of learning orientation Friedman's test statistic result of dimensions of learning orientation

Statistic	Amount of statistic
Number	152

chi-squar	22
Degrees of freedom	2
sig	.000

The result of this test is significant with the amount of chi-squar = 22 (sig = 0.000).

Table VIII: Results of Friedman test mean ranking of dimensions of organizational learning

Components	Mean ranking	Ranks
Commitment to learning orientation	1	2.036
Open-mindedness	1	2.036
Shared vision	2	1.93

Table IX: Results of Friedman test statistic of performance dimensions

Statistic	Amount of statistic
Number	152
chi-squar	27.80
Degrees of freedom	2
sig	.000

The result of this test is significant with the amount of chi-squar = 27.80 (sig = 0.000).

Table X: Mean ranking Friedman test result, dimensions of performance

Components	Mean ranking	Ranks
Market share	1	2.25
Return on investment	2	2.02
Proportion of sales	3	1.73

The results of exploratory factor analysis

In this research, for the study of the test factors has been used of exploratory factor analysis. Criterion of the percentage of variance explained by factors also is other criteria for determining the number of factors. According to the results of exploratory factor analysis, the percentage of total variance explained by the main component is higher than 0.05, which shows that the exploratory factor analysis is to justify variance could have done better.

1. The main research hypotheses were confirmed but some secondary hypotheses, including hypothesis of the relationship between innovation with return on sales and investments were not confirmed. In other words, it was found that organizational learning and its dimensions is effective in increase innovation and innovation is a significant and positive effect on market share. Also the relationship between learning orientations and its dimensions and organizational performance are positive and significant.

2. According to the research findings highest rank is allocated in the creation of innovation of dimensions of learning orientation and commitment to learning and open-mindedness and the lowest is shared vision since the effect of learning orientation factors was specified in creation of innovation can by using them to increase organizational innovation in the company. Also dimensions of have positive effect as direct and indirect on organizational performance. Indirect effect of learning orientation is through innovation on performance learning orientation factors. But its direct effect on performance is highest.

Table XI: Mean ranking Friedman test result dimensions of effective organizational learning, on innovation and performance

Components	Mean ranking	Ranks
Commitment to learning orientation	1	2.036
Open-mindedness	1	2.036
Shared vision	2	1.93

The results of testing hypotheses

After statistical analysis, which was mentioned in the chapter of research methodology were obtained the following results:

The conclusion of the hypotheses

The first hypothesis was that there is a relationship between learning orientation and innovation. The main hypothesis in the fourth chapter showed a significant correlation between learning orientation and innovation. So, the results show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.210, thus said to be direct and positive correlation between learning orientation and innovation.

The first subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between the organization's commitment to learning and innovation, the findings of hypothesis showed a significant correlation between organizational commitment to learning and innovation. So the results show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.208. As a result, it is said that there is a direct and positive relationship between organizational commitment to learning and innovation.

The second subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between open-mindedness and innovation. The findings of hypothesis in the fourth chapter showed a significant correlation between open-mindedness and innovation. So the results show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.208. In conclusion it is said that there is a direct and positive relationship between open-mindedness and innovation.

The third subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between shared vision and innovation, the findings of hypothesis showed a significant correlation between shared vision and innovation. So the results show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.207. As a result, it is said that there is a direct and positive relationship between shared vision and innovation.

The second main hypothesis was that there is a relationship between innovation and performance; the findings show a significant correlation between performance and innovation. So the results show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.203. As a result, it is said that there is a direct and positive correlation between innovation and performance. The first subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between innovation and market share, the findings of hypothesis in the fourth chapter showed a significant correlation between innovation and market share. So the results show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.167. As a result, it is said that there is a direct and positive relationship between innovation and market share. The second subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between innovation and the proportion of sales, according to the results of the analysis, there is no relation between these two dimensions as a result of this hypothesis was rejected. The third subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between innovation and return on investment, according to the results of the analysis, there is no relation between these two dimensions as a result of this hypothesis was rejected.

The third main hypothesis was that there is a relationship between learning and performance; the hypothesis findings show a significant correlation between learning and performance. So, results of the analysis show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.906. The result is said to be a direct and positive relationship between learning orientation and performance.

The first subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between learning orientation and market share; the hypothesis findings show a significant correlation between learning orientation and market share. So, results of the analysis show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.606. The result is said to be so results of the analysis show a correlation coefficient equal to 0.606. The result is said to be a direct and positive relationship between learning orientation and market share there is a direct and positive relationship between learning orientation and market share.

The second subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between learning orientation and the proportion of sales; the hypothesis findings show a significant correlation of the proportion of sales and learning orientation. So, results of the analysis showed a correlation coefficient equal to 0.661. In conclusion it is said to be there is a direct and positive connection between learning orientation and proportion of sales.

The third subsidiary hypothesis was that there is a relationship between learning orientation and return on investment, the hypothesis findings show a significant correlation of return on investment and learning orientation. So, results of the analysis showed a correlation coefficient equal to 0.548. The result is said to be there is a direct and positive relationship between learning orientation and return on investment.

III. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between learning orientation and innovation and organizational performance. And hypothesis results show confirmed the evidence. Firstly organizational learning refers to the organizational climate in which provides and be easy organizational learning and allowing organizations to learn. And organizational innovation refers to the creation of competitive advantage for organizations. The results of this study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between learning orientation and organizational performance and innovation and companies and organizations if using of learning in organization can become innovative organizations. And effective organizational learning can help to improve innovation in organization. Knowing "organizational innovation" in a company as potential power and refers to the capacity of (potential) company to do innovation in its products or processes. Company to establish and increase their innovation capacity requires the factors that can be motivating innovation and open the field to create new products and processes. The analysis results show that aspects of the organization's commitment to learning and open-mindedness are having the greatest impact on innovation because the positive and significant effects of commitment to learning on innovation is due to value that organizations attach to learning so that takes shape a kind learning culture in the organization and the organization can be committed to learn values, and understanding of the causes and their effects, On the other hand organization's commitment to learning, or the value that organization consider to learn and grow it will

be effective on the development of learning environment and the welcoming new ideas in organizations. Results of this study are consistent with the findings of others. This study showed that the correct use of innovation management techniques increases capabilities and innovative capacity of companies in the introduction of products and processes facilitates the necessary changes in the organization. But prevailing of the companies does not have appropriate culture of innovation to start changes in their own organization and most of the staff and sometimes managers show fierce resistance against it. Also majority of small and medium sized companies do not have staff with experience in these techniques and lack of knowledge within the organization in connection with the technique and using it. According to many researchers and science specialists management, creating new and innovative products that competitors are unable to imitate, one of the most important and most reliable ways to gain competitive advantage. Especially by relying on methods not easily limited.

Research suggestions

Practical suggestions

- 1) Identifying customer needs and market opportunities before competitors with do effective marketing research
- 2) to provide research space and proper facilities for innovative actions
- 3) recruitment and selection and training of creative, committed and responsible and experienced expert
- 4) create a culture of innovation in companies in order to support their innovational efforts
- 5) set the strategy in relation to innovation and performing process innovation
- 6) Create entrepreneurship policy in company to create innovation
- 7) Identify the factors affecting on organizational learning on the ability to increase innovation in companies

Research limitations

Despite the achievements noted in this study, was faced with the limitation that the main limitations of this study include:

- It has not been pay to all the factors in the way of effectiveness on increase innovation and organizational performance and extend the results of this study need further investigation and involved the other factors.

- The use of questionnaires and lack the necessary information and also another limitation of this study is the small sample size.

- All data are cross-sectional collected. So variables and its results are limited to a point of time.

Suggestions for future researches

- Present study is do in knowledge-based companies and small and medium companies Therefore, future studies can be used to generalize the results of research in other industries.

- Develop a specific questionnaire in any industry and using them, to better match this questionnaire proposed for future research.

- To further research suggested that will be paid to study the innovation capacity in more samples.

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