

The Impact of Learning Organization on the Performance of Organizations and Job Satisfaction of Employees: An Empirical Study on Some Public and Private Universities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Learning organization is a growing concern that has become a widespread philosophy in contemporary society and business. This provides a platform to build capacity of human resources where people can learn continually, nurture new patterns of thinking and develop a culture of collective learning to produce desired results. Watkins & Marsick (1993) has proposed seven dimensions of learning organization that are useful to measure the performance of organizations and job satisfaction of employees. In order to create learning organization, organizations can use different techniques, such as: team learning, system connection, knowledge management, shared vision, and strategic leadership that are proposed by Peter Senge (1990). There is a significant research gap to measure the impact of learning organization on the public and private universities in Bangladesh. Thus, this research reveals the impact of learning organization on the overall performance of the universities and job satisfaction of their faculty members. The practice of effective learning organization can improve the performance of the universities and their employees' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Impact, Culture, Job satisfaction, Performance, and Universities.

1. Introduction

The external environment of today's organizations is changing drastically. Thus, organizations require rapid adjustment with this change to sustain in the competitive global market. Due to the dramatic technological advancement, every organization whether doing business in public or private sector, must be dynamic in their way of operation. In a relatively stable environment, once an organization has learnt how to operate properly, the urgency for further learning is dismissed. However, the breakneck pace of current world claims an organization develops a dynamic learning culture. To stay effective and successful, organizations have to be as fast as their environment is changing. Organizations need to develop a learning culture than ever since the competition has intensified.

Garvin (1993) defines a learning organization as "an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights." The definition depicting that organizations need to modify itself in accordance with the change in the way work gets done and shows the vive of new learning. The most difficult task is to disseminate the knowledge that has learnt to change the behavior to keep conformity with the changing environment.

Peter Senge (1990) in the Fifth Discipline, defines learning organization as a place of capacity building to create desired results, nurture new patterns of thinking, encourage team learning, knowledge sharing and continuously learn the way of learning. This definition is very abstract and idyllic. It focuses on developing employees' skills to effectively create, acquire, and transfer knowledge. These employees help firms to cultivate tolerance, foster open discussion, and think holistically and systemically. Thus, learning organizations can adapt to uncertainty quicker than their rivals (Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino, 2008).

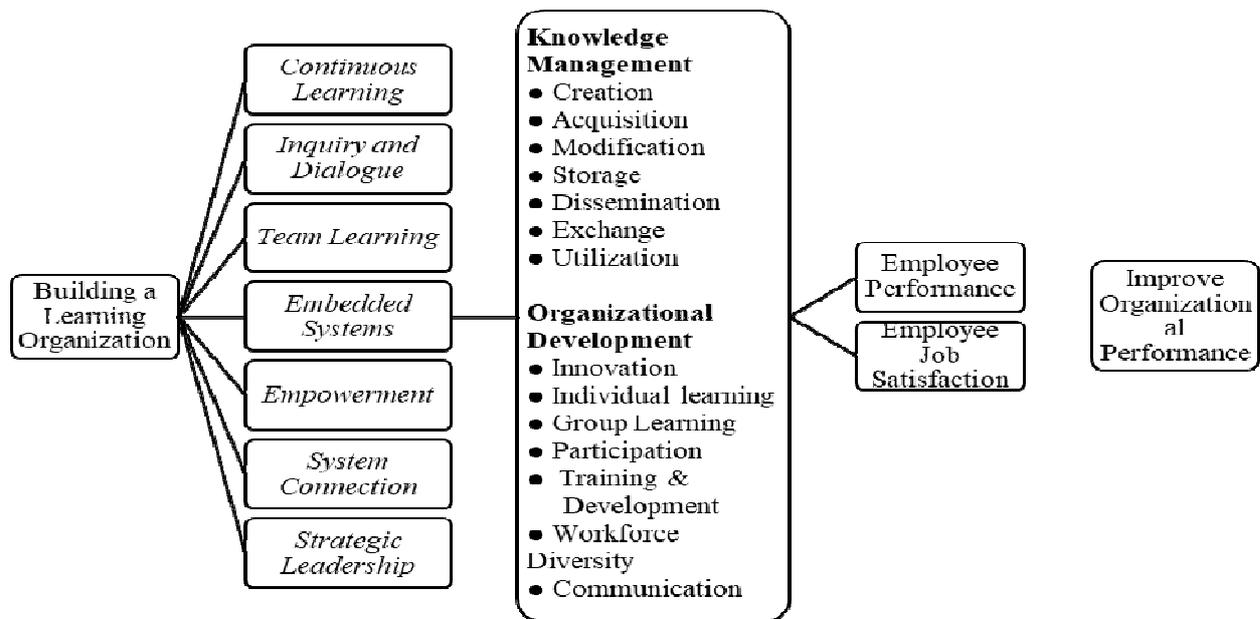
The notion of learning organization has emerged in recent years and inspired both academics and practitioners to produce a large volume of textbooks and journals that indicated as a prescription for profitable organizational and means of sustainable competitiveness. Learning organization can be characterised as an organization that regularly creates, transforms, disseminates and integrates knowledge to put into actions based on perceptions and experience in order to meet strategic objectives (Lewis, 2002).

Organizational research has identified three broad factors that are important for organizational learning and adaptability: a supportive learning environment, proper learning processes and practices, and transformational leadership behavior that provides reinforcement. The study refers these as the building blocks of the learning organization. Each block and its discrete subcomponents, though vital to the whole, are independent and can be measured separately (Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino, 2008).

Watkins & Marsick (1993) has mentioned seven major dimensions of learning organization that are very popular and effective to articulate learning culture. These include continuous learning, inquiry and dialogues, team learning, embedded systems, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership. All these dimensions constitute the bases for knowledge management and organizational development. As a result, organizations can improve its performance and job satisfaction of employees for competitiveness.

Learning organization is a recent development in Bangladesh. Leaders and managers often think that learning organization can be developed by articulating a clear vision, offering incentives to employees, and providing lots of training. This assumption is merely flawed because it is risky for the company in the face of intense competition, rapid technological change, and variation in customer preferences to remain competitive (Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino, 2008).

Our study measures the relationships among various dimensions of learning organization in the public and private universities with organizational performance and job satisfaction. The following diagram represents the process of improving organizational performance by building a learning organization:



Source: Adapted from Watkins & Marsick (1993) and King (2009).

The above diagram shows that in order to build a learning organization and culture, firms need to incorporate all the dimensions identified by Watkins & Marsick that further contributes to the process of knowledge management and organizational development. The elements listed in the knowledge management and organizational development also contribute to improvement of employee performance and job satisfaction. Thus, improved organizational performance is the end result of learning organization.

2. Literature Review

The concept of learning organization has been introduced by Peter Senge in 1990 who elucidated that learning organizational practice is mandatory for the organization to create an environment that is supportive towards the employees to make them able to learn new knowledge and properly share it with all other employees. Roberts, Ross, Kleiner, Smith, and Senge (1994) defines learning as continuous testing of experience, and the transformation of that experience into knowledge that are accessible to the whole organization, and relevant to its core purpose. Jamali et al. (2009) mentioned that in a genuine learning organization, people at all levels, individually and collectively work to increase capacity to generate outcome continuously. The concept of learning organization has emerged in recent years. It encouraged both academics and practitioners to produce a high volume of textbooks and studies, and has been widely indicated as a prescription for profitable organizational action and sustainable competitiveness.

Watkins and Marsick (1996) claims that learning organizations have seven characteristics that are continuous learning opportunities, inquiry and dialogue, collaboration and team learning, a system to capture and share learning, a collective vision, connection to company's environment and strategic leadership for learning. Having grounded on those seven features of the learning organization, Watkins and Marsick derive the new model that specified learning organization components can be divided into three. The first module consists of system level and continuous learning, second component is learning then produces and manages knowledge outcomes and third component is the outcomes that lead to organization's performance and value.

The university is a combination of people with different backgrounds in terms of needs, skills, talents, status, competencies, knowledge, behavioral styles, interest and perceptions (Nakpodia, 2003). In fact, the skilled manpower and high level talented people needed for the development and growth of any country are produced by the universities, which are seen as learning organizations. According to the National Policy on Education

(NPE, 2004), universities as learning organizations are centers of superiority, store houses of knowledge, teaching, research, an opportunity for in house and outdoor training, and sharing knowledge.

Both overtly and covertly, the importance of learning at individual level has been created by the universities. The universities also created the idea of learning as the essentials of progress within universities. Gaita (1997) depicts that the skills and high level of manpower that need for notion development were produced by universities. University is learning organization, which is an organization where all staff members learn continuously to gain new knowledge and possess skills and use their learning to advance both individual and organizational interest, while teaching students to learn how to learn.

Ramsden (1998) stated that, in responding towards the globalization era and new advancement of technology, universities are now having the features of learning organization. University is a place where new knowledge are discussing everyday which educators and students are together learn and share the knowledge. They will continually learn and develop required skills, so it will help them to improve their performance and satisfaction. However, in universities even academicians rarely practiced the simplest theories found in learning organization concept. This circumstances was due to the culture of institution that more on ranking competition, authoritarian and hierarchical structures and acceptance or rejection (White & Weathersby, 2004).

Hart and Cooper (2001) mentioned that superior performance of organization and job satisfaction of employees are considered as the most significant work outcomes lying at the core of individual and organizational welfare. Gould-Williams & Davies (2005) integrates HR practices with learning organizational that affect organizational performance, success and competitiveness. Pool & Pool (2007) mentioned job satisfaction is the physical, environmental and mental pleasure that an employee derives from her/his job; it can be described as an employee' sentimental and cognitive behavior towards certain aspects of his/her work.

Campbell et al, (1990) defines job performance as a process to appraisal of a staff member's performance on job-related attitudes and outcomes in comparison with her/his colleagues; it can be measured in terms of each employee's level of expertise and contribution to achieving organizational goals.

According to many researchers, learning organization has very constructive impact on work outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organizational performance (Dirani, 2009; Yang et al, 2004). Certain empirical studies indicate an intense positive correlation between major characteristics of learning organization and employee job satisfaction (Chang & Lee, 2007; Egan et al, 2004; Goh, 2003; Rose et al, 2009).

The employed individuals who used to work in the arrangement of learning organization, are portrayed as highly energized and motivated, and tend to experience positive psychological outcomes, such as better commitment and work satisfaction. Organizations providing staff members with profound resources and opportunities for learning, self-enhancement and professional advancement, offer their employees significant psychological benefits and elevated job satisfaction (Mulraney & Turner, 2001; Rowden & Conine, 2005). Goh (2003) highlights a statistically significant positive association of job satisfaction with experimentation and shared leadership. Provision of learning prospects combined with empowerment and systems thinking enhance internal and external job satisfaction (Eylon & Bamberger, 2000).

Participative management and staff active involvement in organizational processes improve supervisory communication and have a significant positive influence on work satisfaction (Kim, 2002). Enabling employees to highly impact their work environment and treating them as key stakeholders, increases the pleasure they derive from their occupation. Gaertner (2000) states that leadership which stimulates questioning, promotes teamwork, sets examples and offers rewards, has been widely considered as a sauce to increase job satisfaction. Work satisfaction can be adversely affected by the nonexistence of transparent and open communication, well and trusted relations and group work (Griffin et al, 2001).

Kontoghioehes, Awbrey and Feurig (2005) measured the relationship of certain learning organizational dimensions with change adaptation, innovation and bottom line organizational performance. Open communication and information sharing, new idea promotion and risk taking, information, time, facts, and resource availability to perform one's job in a professional manner are the learning organization dimensions that were found to be the strongest predictors of rapid change adaptation, quick product introduction, and bottom-line organizational performance.

A research work has conducted on the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment among nursing managers. There was a significant relationship between Learning organization and organizational commitment, and also between learning organization and job experience as per the outcome of this particular research. Only organizations with active adaptation can survive and remain capable of growth (Yaghoubi; Raeisi; Afshar; Yarmohammadian; Hasanzadeh; Javadi; and Ansary, 2010).

3. Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to measure the impact of learning organization on the overall performance of the organizations. To satisfy the main objective, the following specific objectives were set:

- i. Identify job satisfaction level of employees if the learning organization prevails.

- ii. Measure the performance of top ranked universities when practicing learning organization.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sources of data

The research is exploratory in nature. This is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research. To collect data for this type of research, two methods can be used: survey and observation. In this study survey method is used to collect primary data. A structured questionnaire was developed for this purpose. Respondents were required to complete the questionnaire that solicited their views on the practice of learning organization.

3.2 Population size

In Bangladesh, there are more than 100 public and private universities that are currently being operated. To be specific, there are currently 37 public and 92 private universities that are UGC approved. Among the various universities, a number of respondents have been chosen to fulfill the purpose of the study.

3.3 Sample size

The survey has been conducted on 40 respondents from 18 different universities that included 6 public and 12 private universities. Universities are selected based on convenience and where the access was available to conduct the survey. The universities taken under consideration are listed below:

Public Universities: University of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar University, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Khulna University, Jagannath University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

Private Universities: Independent University Bangladesh, North South University Bangladesh, Ahsanullah University of Science & Technology, East West University Bangladesh, Daffodil International University, BRAC University, Stamford University Bangladesh, United International University, Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, Northern University Bangladesh, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

3.4 Sampling technique

The research is based on convenience sampling under the non-probability sampling techniques. Convenience sampling is used due to cost effectiveness and time constraint.

3.5 Definition of the variables

There are seven dimensions of learning organization according to Watkins and Marsick (1993). This research has considered all these dimensions as variables to measure the impact of learning organization since the survey questions regarding universities can be easily grouped under these dimensions. These dimensions are defined as follows:

Continuous learning: Learning is designed into work so that people can learn on the job; opportunities are provided for ongoing education and growth.

Inquiry and dialogue: People gain productive reasoning skills to express their views and the capacity to listen and inquire into the views of others; the culture is changed to support questioning, feedback, and experimentation.

Collaboration and team learning: Work is designed to use groups to access different modes of thinking; groups are expected to learn together and work together; collaboration is valued by the culture and rewarded.

Embedded system: Both high and low technology systems to share learning are created and integrated with work; access is provided; systems are maintained.

Empowerment: People are involved in setting, owning, and implementing a joint vision; responsibility is distributed close to decision making so that people are motivated to learn toward what they are held accountable to do.

System connection: People are helped to see the effect of their work on the entire enterprise; people scan the environment and use information to adjust work practices; the organization is linked to its communities.

Strategic leadership: Leaders model, champion, and support learning: leadership uses learning strategically for business results.

3.6 Test of reliability and validity

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis

Variables	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Continuous Learning	4	.650
Promote Dialogue and Inquiry	4	.849
Encourage collaboration and team learning	4	.709
Embedded System	2	.773
Environment Connection	3	.683
Empowerment	3	.781
Strategic Leadership	4	.809

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

The above table shows the reliability of the components of learning organizations against the responses from a pilot survey. All the variables were tested for Cronbach's Alpha and the values for all components range from 0.650 to 0.849. Therefore, it can be said that, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was accepted.

3.7 Analytical tools used

The aim of this research is to figure out whether there is any impact of learning organization on the overall performance of the organizations and satisfaction of employees in the public and private universities of Bangladesh. To come out with results, correlation and regression analysis between learning organization and organizational performance and satisfaction of employees have been conducted through the use of SPSS software.

3.8 Research Scope

The research result can be used for both academic and professional purpose. The organization can have overview on their extent of practicing learning culture. To accelerate progress in modern era, they can realize the importance of learning culture. The potential students of universities also get idea about the learning culture of particular university.

3.9 Limitations

The population of this research is too large. But the research is confined to only 40 respondents. Moreover, different faculties or institutes may have different learning facilities. As respondents from each university are not more than 3 employees, there may be slight variation in the accuracy of the results. However, human errors are possible. Some of the information cannot be collected due to confidentiality of that particular university.

4. Analysis and Findings

4.1 Perceptions about practicing learning organizational dimensions

The seven dimensions of learning organization whether practiced in the private and public universities are shown in Table 2. In this study, the variables in the questionnaire are thrown on a five level Likert Scale with a score of 3.0 denoted "neutral". Therefore, when the respondents marked 3 or more in the scale, then that indicates their universities could be considered as practicing the particular dimension of learning organization.

Table 2: Perception about practicing Learning Organizational dimensions

Learning organizational dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation
Continuous Learning	4.07	.873
Promote Dialogue and Inquiry	4.15	.808
Encourage collaboration and team learning	3.32	.979
Embedded System	4.55	.727
Environment Connection	3.84	.841
Empowerment	4.14	.953
Strategic Leadership	3.28	.901

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

The mean scores show that, all the dimensions are being practiced in the universities of Bangladesh. The components of "Embedded system" are being practiced most; the mean score of this dimension is 4.55. The lowest is 3.28, which is "Strategic leadership". Since all variables have a mean score greater than midpoint that is the neutral position, so it can be said that the universities are adopting the culture of learning organization. Therefore, the universities of Bangladesh are considered as learning organization where all the members of the organization cooperate together to learn and reinforce knowledge.

4.2 Correlation between learning organizational dimensions and the overall performance of the organization

Table 3: Correlation between Learning organizational dimensions & overall performance

Learning organizational dimensions	Overall performance
Continuous Learning	r- 0.576
Promote Dialogue and Inquiry	r- 0.417
Encourage collaboration and team learning	r- 0.479
Embedded System	r- 0.523
Environment Connection	r- 0.401
Empowerment	r- 0.700
Strategic Leadership	r- 0.459

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

The above table shows that there is moderate to positive correlation between the components of learning organization and the overall performance of the organization. The dimension “Empowerment” has a strong relationship with organizational performance that is 0.700. The lowest among them is with the dimension “Promote Dialogue and Inquiry” which is 0.417. As empowerment dimension has strong relationship with the performance of the organization, the relationship of the sub factors under empowerment with the organizational performance is shown below:

Table 4: Correlation between Embedded System and Organizational Performance

Correlations

		Organization organize annual competition such as: Business Plan, debate & Case for the students	Organization ask faculty members to propose list of books and journals to increase library resource	Organization conducts in house training and seminar to develop teaching and research skills of faculty members	Learning organization affect the overall performance of the organization
Organization organize annual competition such as: Business Plan, debate & Case for the students	Pearson Correlation	1	.573**	.612**	.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.001
	N	40	40	40	40
Organization ask faculty members to propose list of books and journals to increase library resource	Pearson Correlation	.573**	1	.585**	.877**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	40	40	40	40
Organization conducts in house training and seminar to develop teaching and research skills of faculty members	Pearson Correlation	.612**	.585**	1	.710*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.011
	N	40	40	40	40
Learning organization affect the overall performance of the organization	Pearson Correlation	.514**	.727**	.400*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.011	
	N	40	40	40	40

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is the process of developing statistical model where two types of variables are used- independent variable and dependent variable. Here, the job satisfaction is dependent on the existence of the culture of learning organization that is the independent variable.

Table 5: Model Summary
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.331 ^a	.110	.086	.648

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learning organizational dimensions prevail in your organization.

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

The table- 5 is model summary which provides the value of “R” and “R Square”. The value of “R” is .331 which represents week relationship between the satisfactions in job in accordance with the existence of dimensions of learning organization.

‘R Square’ measures the proportion of variation in dependent variable that can be attributed to the independent variable. It reveals the variability due to the independent variable. Here it is only 11% which is very small. Only 11% variability of job satisfaction can be explained by the independent variable that is the existence of the culture of learning organization.

‘Adjusted R Square’ is used when some independent variables do not add any new information to regression line but increase the value of R Square which causes inflated value of R Square. Here the value is only 8.6% that means only 8.6% variability of job satisfaction can be explained by the independent variable.

‘Standard Error of the Estimates’ measures the deviation of data around the regression line. The value of standard error of estimate is .648.

Table 6: ANOVA
ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.965	1	1.965	4.686	.037 ^a
	Residual	15.935	38	.419		
	Total	17.900	39			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learning organizational dimensions prevail in your organization.

b. Dependent Variable: You are satisfied in your job in terms of learning opportunity.

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

‘ANOVA’ reports how well the regression equation fits the data (i.e., predicts the dependent variable). This table indicates that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. The value of significance is .037 which is less than .05. That means 3.7% errors occurred and it is statistically significant.

‘Sum of Squares’ describes the variation which is attributed to the relationship between dependent and independent variable which shows the explained variation values. Here sum of squares is 1.965.

‘df’ shows the number of independent variable. Here degree of freedom of regression is 1. In case of residual $df = N - K - 1 = 40 - 1 - 1 = 38$. So the number of independent variable is 39.

‘Mean Square’ means average deviation of degree of freedom of regression that is 1.965 and .419 in Regression and Residual respectively.

‘F Test’ is the ratio between Mean Square Regression and Mean Square Residual. The value here is 4.686.

Table 7: Coefficients
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.528	.438		8.059	.000
Learning organizational dimensions prevail in your organization.	.244	.113	.331	2.165	.037

a. Dependent Variable: You are satisfied in your job in terms of learning opportunity.

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

In the coefficient table it can be seen that the independent variable has significance value of .037. It means that in 1000 trial, only 37 times it is wrong. So, in drawing the regression line this factor will be used. Standardized Coefficients denotes that job satisfaction is positively correlated with the existence of learning organizational dimensions and the value is .331.

4.4 Comparison of universities against the depth of practice of learning organizational dimensions and the ranking of the universities

This comparison is used to check whether the top ranked universities of Bangladesh are practicing more of learning organizational dimensions or not. The ranking is followed that is done by the “Ranking Web of Universities.” The following table shows the ranking and the level of practice of learning organizational dimensions in the particular universities:

Table 8: Comparison between practicing learning culture and ranking of the universities

Ranking of ontahaen.com ¹	Ranking of webometrics.info ²	University Name	Depth of practice (Mean Value)
8	9	Independent University Bangladesh	4.680
9	11	North South University Bangladesh	4.620
10	8	Shahjalal University of Science & Technology	4.587
2	1	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology	4.400
3	2	University of Dhaka	4.400
22	23	Ahsanullah University of Science & Technology	4.320
37	27	East West University Bangladesh	4.240
17	12	Daffodil International University	3.920
6	4	BRAC University	3.900
23	24	Jagannath University	3.800
32	29	Stamford University Bangladesh	3.560
16	17	United International University	3.500
7	5	Jahangirnagar University	3.385
14	10	Khulna University	3.380
90	73	Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology	3.380
42	49	Northern University Bangladesh	3.220
97	59	Bangladesh University of Business and Technology	3.160
46	48	University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh	2.940

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2017

The table shows that, the university named “Independent University Bangladesh” that is in number 8th/ 9th position in ranking, is practicing the learning organizational dimensions most. The mean value is 4.680 (responses received on five points Likert Scale). The “University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh” is in the last position in terms of practicing the learning culture; the mean value is 2.940. Therefore, it can be said that, the ranking of the universities are not solely dependent on practicing the learning culture, rather there are some other dimensions to be counted for. Although, the practice of learning culture cannot be ignored as well, as it has significant impact in making the rank order of universities in terms of better performance.

5. Conclusion

The outcomes of the study clearly states that, there is positive correlation between practicing the learning organizational and overall performance of the universities. All the dimensions of learning organization are positively correlated with better organizational performance. The regression analysis depicts that the job satisfaction of employees can partly be explained by the presence of learning organization. In this study, learning organization constitutes 11% of job satisfaction although there are others factors involve with employee job satisfaction. It is important to know that learning organization has positive impact on the satisfaction level of the teachers of private and public universities. To rank the universities, lots of criteria have been considered whereas learning culture is one of them. The universities listed in the top rank in Bangladesh, are practicing learning organization at least to some extent.

After conducting the analysis, it can be concluded that learning organization has some impact on the performance of universities and employees job satisfaction. Universities that are practicing learning organization, result better performance and employee job satisfaction. They have great chance to flourish and develop academic excellence by practicing effective learning organization. To meet growing competition in the modern

¹<https://www.ontahaen.com/bangladesh-university-ranking/>

² <http://webometrics.info/en>

era, the universities have to ensure the practice of learning organization in all the dimensions as these propel the performance of universities. The teachers and students will get more opportunities to explore themselves if learning culture prevails in the organization. So for the betterment of the universities as well as teachers and students, it has become necessary to have effective learning culture in every university in Bangladesh.

6. Recommendations

The practice of learning organization must be reinforced to improve the performance of public and private universities in Bangladesh. To ensure effective practice of learning organization, the universities can focus on all the dimension identified by Watkins & Marsick (1993). The organization also require to integrate team learning, system connection, knowledge management, shared vision, and strategic leadership that are proposed by Peter Senge (1990). Moreover, to explore the potential of faculty members, it is necessary to create a culture of rewarding excellent teaching and research activities.

In most of the universities of Bangladesh, there is little collaboration with international virtual library and access to international literature. It is essential for universities to have adequate access to international library and online literature to foster knowledge sharing and intellectual resource development.

The universities can increase exchange program with foreign universities for students and teachers to develop intellectual capability and enhance knowledge sharing. Moreover, there should be collaborative research and training program for teachers and students that are associated with foreign universities. The performance of the faculty members of public and private universities should be measured periodically to ensure collective learning and knowledge sharing. This process will enhance involvement of employees in the learning process and increase overall performance of the organizations.

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