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The impact of the reality of organizational learning on organizational excellence: An exploratory study of the opinions of administrative leaders at Tikrit University

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Abstract

The research seeks to establish a causal relationship between organizational learning and the attainment of organizational excellence in administrative leaders at the university being studied. This is motivated by the growing interest and ongoing advancements in organizations, the modern business environment, and various emerging concepts among academic researchers and practitioners in the field of organizations. As these changes occurred, the importance of competing based on cost economics, efficiency, and differentiation decreased in favor of a new approach to competition focused on excelling strategically and maximizing customer and stakeholder value. This shift in thinking about organizational success moved away from solely achieving financial returns or market share targets and towards possessing strategic abilities. In order to obtain knowledge that would provide the organization with a long-lasting competitive advantage, the research employed a descriptive analytical approach. This involved creating a questionnaire specifically designed for this purpose, which was then distributed to a sample of 50 administrative leaders at Tikrit University. The collected data was analyzed using the statistical program SpssV.23. The research findings indicate a robust and statistically significant relationship between the factors of organizational learning and organizational distinctiveness. These results align with the initial hypothesis. The research put out a series of recommendations, which included the necessity for the university administration to clearly articulate the goals of organizational learning and its future trajectories in a manner that aids in attaining organizational distinctiveness.

Keywords: Organizational learning, organizational excellence, attaining organizational distinctiveness

Introduction

Emerging concepts have arisen among academics, professionals, and researchers investigating companies in the contemporary business environment. Many organizations have achieved competitive capabilities by adopting the organizational learning approach. This approach involves interacting, extrapolating, exploring, and continuously confronting environmental challenges. Through this process, organizations are able to create solutions and choose alternatives that lead to continuous improvement or radical change in their behavior. This ensures their survival and competitive superiority. Organizational learning has gained significant prominence in the past two decades of the previous century and the early years of the present century. These interests aligned with the world's dramatic shift towards the knowledge and information era, which is concerned with investing in intellectual property and tacit knowledge and figuring out how to profit from it, as well as converting it into work environments and behavioral models that serve as a constant source of information to update and supplement organizational memory through organizational learning. The majority of researchers believe that organizational learning is the most significant source of competitive advantage; thus, in order to meet these difficulties, corporate organizations must forgo old frameworks and models and adopt and activate the organizational learning process. Many knowledge-based organizations in developed nations have come to this realization and have attained high learning levels to improve their competitiveness, particularly since these organizations, while possessing a wealth of knowledge and learning applications-albeit inadvertent ones-still have a limited adoption of these novel concepts in their cultural lexicon.

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Therefore, the significance of the current study becomes apparent as it aims to stimulate interest in the role that organizational learning plays in helping universities achieve their objectives, both generally and specifically among research subjects.

Research Methodology

Research Problem

Research problem revolves around the level and nature of the organizational learning relationship and its impact on achieving organizational differentiation in educational organizations. The problem can be summarized in the following questions:

1. What is the percentage of organizational learning in the researched educational organization?
2. Does the researched educational organization achieve organizational differentiation?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between organizational learning and organizational differentiation in educational organizations?
4. What is the nature of the impact of organizational learning in achieving organizational differentiation in educational organizations?

The Importance of the research

The importance of the research can be indicated according to the following:

1. The importance of the research is embodied in addressing a vital topic that organizations, especially Iraqi ones, urgently need to have the ability to identify the basic capabilities of organizational learning requirements to help them achieve organizational distinction and how to extract, transfer and use the knowledge they have to achieve excellence in their performance.
2. Its importance emerges through focusing on increasing the effectiveness and perception of learning among managers in the organizations studied to motivate them to realize the importance of knowledge and the best ways to activate it through their outstanding performance among competing organizations.

Research Objective

In light of the research problem and the scarcity of field studies linking organizational learning and organizational differentiation, this research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine the level of organizational learning in the researched organization.
2. Clarifying and interpreting the nature of the correlations and influence between organizational learning and organizational differentiation in the researched organization.
3. Clarifying the theoretical and practical implications and implications of organizational learning processes for the sample managers of the organization under study in enhancing their ability to achieve organizational differentiation.

Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of achieving the objectives of the research mentioned above, the following hypotheses were

formulated:

- **Firstly:** The investigated educational organization achieves organizational distinction.
- **Secondly:** There is a significant relationship between the organizational learning process and organizational differentiation
- **Third:** The organizational learning process affects organizational differentiation.

Literature Review

First: The Concept of Organizational Learning:

Organizational learning is considered one of the modern administrative concepts, which is still in the stage of conceptual development, through researchers proposing models in an effort to reach measures for the levels of learning in organizations of all specializations. Therefore, organizational learning is a means that affects the organization's capabilities in confronting old assumptions and facilitating scientific methodologies and new technologies. As a concept, it refers to a set of values that influence the degree to which the organization is convinced of its theory in use (Al-Dulaimi, 2009, 53)^[4]. (Al-Baghdadi, 2010, 50)^[2] referred to organizational learning in technical terms as the process through which managers seek to improve the ability of employees to understand and manage the organization and its environment by enabling them to make decisions that constantly increase organizational effectiveness. (Al-Dhiyab, 2014, 8)^[3] believes That learning the organization is a skill that works to look at the big picture of the organization in open relations with its external environment and that everyone is part of one system, while (Hussein, 2012, 51)^[6] states that it is the organization that meets the conditions that distinguish it from other traditional organizations in terms of empowering its workers of continuous learning, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between its members and society, adopting a strategy of participation, allowing opportunities to exchange knowledge and information, and an adaptive organizational culture capable of adapting to continuous changes. (John, 2006, 80) added that it is the process of acquiring knowledge and using information that enables the organization and its beliefs to adapt to the constantly changing environment. Therefore, organizational learning is the process through which organizations seek to improve their overall capabilities, develop themselves, activate their relationship with the environment, and adapt to their internal and external conditions (Diop, 2013, 12)^[14], while (Hassan & Tawfiq, 2017, 217)^[15] explained it as a continuous process through which organizations seek to acquire knowledge to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

Second: The Importance of Organizational Learning:

Researchers' interest in organizational learning has increased in recent times due to the ongoing competition between organizations, the emergence of modern technologies, and the major changes occurring in the environment that make the organization appear as a learning unit that possesses a common vision of the effects of the various branches of knowledge that create opportunities for competitive advantage. (Hassan & Tawfiq, 2017, 217)^[15] believes that organizational learning is an important incentive for workers to acquire skills and knowledge and

provide them with the necessary experiences to reshape their intellectual frameworks. (Al-Dulaimi, 2009, 62) ^[4] stated that the importance of organizational learning can be found in it being a basic means of defending... The life and continuity of the organization by providing the organization with levels that are at least equal to the size of the changes that occur in its environment. It also changes the basis of the knowledge base that constitutes the organization's competitive advantage and its core efficiency and is considered an important means of change and adaptation. It also contributes to enriching knowledge accumulation and is considered the most valuable organizational resource for maintaining the advantage. Competitiveness can also enable the organization to address old contexts and facilitate new scientific methodologies and technologies.

Third: Types of Organizational Learning: Many researchers have confirmed that there are multiple types of organizational learning, and this has been confirmed (Daham, 2007, 141) ^[13], which are as follows:

- **First-level learning:** It has been given the following names: single-loop learning, adaptive learning, non-strategic learning, additive growth learning, and improvement learning, which includes improving the result.
- **Second-level learning:** He gave it the following names: Double-loop learning, generative learning, strategic learning, radical learning, and transitional learning, which ensures the renewal of the result.

Fourth: Dimensions of Organizational Learning: Everyone agrees (Al-Futaih, 2013, 26-27) ^[11], (Ayoub, 73, 2004) ^[11] that organizational learning has three basic dimensions:

1. The strategic dimension: The strategic dimension is one of the basic dimensions that organizational learning adopts in achieving organizational goals, and it is one of the administrative concepts that can be used in various types of private and public organizations as a comprehensive administrative approach that helps in achieving strategic achievements. The strategic dimension includes the following elements:

2. The organizational dimension: It includes the factors that contribute to supporting the learning process in the organization through:

A. Working through the team: It encourages dialogue among its members and the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and skills. It also stimulates the shared collective ability to generate new, innovative ideas to deal with problems and respond to changes, which leads to ensuring the team's learning and gaining experience through teamwork.

B. Organizational structure: One of the most suitable structures for organizational learning is the flexible structure, such as the matrix structure or the team structure, which gives workers the freedom to experiment and innovate, in addition to adopting the horizontal structure, which contains a smaller number of administrative levels. Decentralization is also relied upon in decision-making and distancing. Avoid routine, bureaucracy, rigid official procedures, and strict control in the work environment, and

that work teams should be close to the decision centers and in constant contact with them.

3. The cultural dimension: It consists

A. Avoid focusing on failure and learning from previous mistakes: By creating a work environment that highly values and encourages learning, and considers that the mistakes that individuals make during implementation do not constitute a weakness in their performance, but rather constitute an opportunity and means for development and learning from those mistakes.

B. The environment supportive of learning: It refers to the ability to find new information and knowledge, refine and preserve it, and then work to use it in dealing with the opportunities and problems facing the organization, while reviewing the current situation of the organization and the practices used in it, and encouraging individuals to find new methods and ideas and introducing improvements in methods. Work, type of products and services and reward creative individuals. (Ayoub, 2004, 73) ^[11].

Fifth: The concept of organizational excellence: The idea of organizational differentiation has been the subject of numerous books, studies, and research projects. This diversity of sources attests to the concept's significance, as modern administrative approaches have concentrated their efforts on defining the idea of organizational differentiation with an emphasis on accomplishing the organization's overarching objectives in the face of numerous environmental changes. (Al-Saudi, 260, 2008) ^[9] explained that it is the ability of organizations to contribute strategically by excelling in its performance and solving its problems, then achieving its goals in an effective way that distinguishes it from other organizations. (Al-Majali, 2009, 46) ^[8] pointed out that it is the work that a person does in order to put mental ideas in a scientific form that has the scope, function, and quality and seeks to communicate Knowledge coupled with it, the recipient's enjoyment, admiration, and knowledge also indicate that it is a creative and harmonious energy found through multiple activities, where distinction is achieved by preserving organizational resources while creating interaction between man and the environment. As Arafa (Al-Kharsha *et al.*, 2013, 214) ^[7] stated that administrative and functional excellence comes through investing in the independent capabilities of employees and the organization alike, and organizational differentiation is achieved through strengths represented in leadership, empowerment, growth, increase, job satisfaction, and performance assignment. And (Al-Khalidi, 2012, 18) ^[6] believes that the ability to provide services in an innovative way that is different from others, and it is almost apologetic to achieve discrimination unless the prevailing culture is a culture of discrimination, which certainly differs from the culture of dependency and leniency. Therefore, to achieve distinction, the culture must be reviewed to ensure that it is loyal to this discrimination, as There is another matter with it, and at the level of a single organization to achieve discrimination, the culture of discrimination must also develop in the organization, As defined by (Nenadá *et al.*, 2018, 48) ^[19], it is the organization's ability to achieve long-term success and its sustainability through organizational

systems that work in a compatible and cohesive manner. While (Al-Taha & Al-Hilali, 2020, 350) ^[10] see that organizational excellence is a description of the organization's orientation and culture towards... Achieving stakeholder satisfaction on the basis of a mutual relationship with the support of administrative leadership and the participation of individuals in decision-making.

Sixthly: The Importance of Organizational Excellence:

The ability of an organization to crystallize the force that supports excellence in organizations by achieving fast rates of change, unrestricted competition, and organizational place and position (human strength-organizational culture-organizational structure) is what makes organizational differentiation so important. From there, organizations can grow a sense of quality and the capacity to use technology in information and creativity (Zayed, 73, 2009) ^[21]. While (Al-Kharsha *et al.*, 217, 2013) ^[7] feels that in order for administrative development to improve performance through the development of employees' and members of the administrative bodies' skills and capabilities which necessitates an effective organizational presence it is imperative that organizational differentiation be prioritized. There is a strong sense of teamwork, creativity, initiative, and competitiveness among the employees, which makes each one feel as though the company is his own. This sense of ownership motivates the employees to put in their all for the success and excellence of the company.

Seventh: Dimensions of Organizational Excellence:

Many writers and researchers agree that different dimensions distinguish organizations from each other, and many researchers agree (Al-Saudi, 260, 2008) ^[9].

- **Strategic differentiation:** Strategic differentiation is a crucial aspect of organizational differentiation, involving the organization's distinct approach to achieving its vision and mission. It links the organization's advantages to its strategic ability to tackle environmental challenges. This distinction is achieved through formulating, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive strategy, which includes administrative decisions and practices that determine long-term organizational performance, the importance of the strategy in achieving organizational distinction lies in the following (Bosalem, 2015,75-76).
- **Culture Distinction:** Distinction through organizational culture includes distinguishing the values and beliefs of influential individuals in the organization and includes elements (openness, cooperation, trust, authenticity, tribal activity, independence and facing problems), Organizational culture affects the level of performance and achievement of groups and subordinates, which determines the success of it greatly distinguishes the organization as a whole. An organization that has a weak or negative culture will face failure in the long term, regardless of the quality and attractiveness of the activity it carries out. In contrast, a distinct organizational culture includes common values, beliefs, and principles among organizational members, which makes the communication process easier and results in a better level of cooperation. Commitment and

simplification of the decision-making process, which pushes subordinates towards achieving the organization's goals and following the standards for achieving organizational excellence.

- **Distinction of subordinates:** Subordinates are crucial to organizational distinction, representing individuals who carry out activities within the organization and are affected by its decisions, they are the most expensive used asset and the most important resource, requiring optimal exploitation of their abilities, skills, competencies, and experience. Subordinates possess distinct mental abilities and creative potentials, helping the organization overcome obstacles and encourage effective participation, ultimately enhancing the achievement of the organization's overall goals (Saudi, 2008, 260) ^[9].

Eighth: Data Analysis

By analyzing the data and discussing the results, we show the levels of answers of the respondents (directors of the study sample) regarding the variables of the study that were dealt with. To achieve this purpose, appropriate statistical tools were used, such as (arithmetic means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages), so an analysis of the related answers can be found. The causes of organizational learning and its impact on achieving organizational differentiation.

1. Describe the variables of the dimensions of organizational learning

A. Strategic Dimension: The data for the strategic variable indicate that a percentage of (72%) of the managers of the study sample agreed with the indicator of this change, and that a percentage of (16%) of the managers of the study sample were neutral, and that (12%) did not agree on the indicator of this variable, and this variable came With an arithmetic mean (2.675) and a standard deviation (0.655), one of the most prominent indicators that contributed to enriching this variable is the variable (x1). This indicator indicates that the university administration determines learning goals and future directions, and this is what organizations seek by improving their overall capabilities and developing themselves.

B. Cultural Dimension: The data on the cultural variable indicate that a percentage of (60%) of the managers of the study sample agreed on the indicators of this variable, and a percentage of (30%) of the managers of the study sample were neutral, and a percentage of (10%) did not agree on the indicator of this change. This variable has an arithmetic mean (2.475) and a standard deviation (0.640). One of the most prominent indicators that contributed to enriching this variable is the variable (x8). This indicates the management's focus on acquiring cumulative knowledge and additional skills through previous experiences of continuous development programs. Therefore, managers in Organizations help develop and innovate, and this is also what organizations strive for, and managers are committed to the culture in order to acquire cumulative knowledge and additional skills.

C. Organizational Dimension: The data for the organizational variable indicate that (74%) agree on the indicators of this change, while (20%) are neutral, while (16%) do not agree on the indicator of this change, and this variable came with an arithmetic mean of (2.675). The

standard deviation is (0.474), and the most prominent of these indicators that contributed to this variable is (15x). This indicates that the administration encourages employees to become familiar with ways of working in a higher learning environment and the changes that may occur to it.

Table 1: Results describing organizational learning and its diagnostic dimensions

Variables	Code	Response scale						Average	S. D.
		agree		neutral		don't agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Strategic dimension	X1	36	72	8	16	6	12	2,675	0,655
	X2	30	60	15	30	5	10	2,575	0,635
	X3	28	56	16	32	6	12	2,400	0,744
	X4	32	64	14	28	4	8	2,675	0,525
	X5	25	50	18	36	7	17	2,375	0,704
Average		30,2		14,2		5,6		2,542	14,2
Cultural dimension	X6	28	56	14	28	8	16	2,375	0,774
	X7	28	56	12	24	10	20	2,350	0,802
	X8	30	60	15	30	5	10	2,475	0,640
	X9	25	50	18	36	7	14	2,400	0,671
	X10	29	58	15	30	6	12	2,425	0,747
Average		28		14,8		7,2		2,405	14,8
Organizational dimension	X11	26	52	16	32	8	16	2,300	0,732
	X12	34	68	12	24	4	8	2,525	0,678
	X13	35	70	13	26	2	4	2,425	0,812
	X14	32	64	15	30	3	6	2,500	0,599
	X15	37	74	10	20	3	6	2,675	0,474
Average		32,8		13,2		4		2,485	13,2

Source: Prepared by the researcher in light of the results of the electronic calculator

2: Dimensions of Organizational Excellence

1. Strategic Excellence: The data on the strategic variable indicate that (74%) of the managers of the study sample agreed with the indicators on this variable, and that (20%) of the managers of the study sample were neutral, and that (6%) did not agree on the indicators of this variable. This variable has an arithmetic mean (2.750) and a standard deviation (0.493). One of the most prominent indicators that contributed to enriching this variable is the variable (x16),

which indicates that management believes that the strategy formulation process is based on cooperation to be successful, and this indicates that the strategy is what determines the long-term goals and objectives of the organization and allocating resources to achieve these goals and objectives. The process of allocating or reallocating resources is the responsibility of the organization's senior management.

Table 2: Results describing organizational excellence and its diagnostic dimensions

Variables	Cod	Response scale						Average	S. D.
		Agree		Neutral		Don't agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Strategic excellence	X16	37	74	10	20	3	6	2,750	0,493
	X17	25	50	21	42	4	8	2,400	0,632
	X18	26	52	15	30	9	18	2,375	0,740
	X19	30	60	14	28	6	12	2,575	0,594
Average		29,5		15		5,5		2,525	0,614
Cultural discrimination	X20	30	60	11	0,715	9	18	2,525	0,715
	X21	35	70	10	0,493	5	10	2,750	0,493
	X22	34	68	10	0,563	6	12	2,700	0,563
	X23	34	68	9	0,615	7	14	2,675	0,615
Average		33,25		10		6,75		2,662	0,596
Distinguishing subordinates	X24	23	46	18	0,723	9	18	2,300	0,723
	X25	22	44	16	0,812	12	24	2,175	0,812
	X26	25	50	20	0,635	5	10	2,425	0,635
	X27	30	60	11	0,782	9	18	2,450	0,782
Average		25		16,25		8,75		2,337	0,738

Source: Prepared by the researcher in light of the results of the electronic calculator

2. Cultural Excellence: The data on the cultural discrimination variable indicate that (70%) of the managers of the study sample agreed with the indicators of this variable, and that (20%) of the managers of the study sample were neutral, and a percentage of (10%) did not agree on the indicators of this variable. This variable has an arithmetic mean (2.750) and a standard deviation (0.493), and one of the most prominent indicators that contributed to enriching this variable is (x21). This indicates the management's emphasis on creative behaviors through which a harmonious culture is formed among employees at work. Therefore, creative behaviors are what Be patient, maintain the organization's secrets, and create a harmonious culture among employees at work.

3. Distinguishing Excellence: The data on the subordinate excellence variable indicate that (60%) agreed on the indicators of this variable, and (22%) were neutral, while (18%) of the managers of the study sample did not agree on the indicators of this variable. This variable came with an arithmetic mean of (2.450) and a standard deviation of (0.782). This indicates that senior management seeks to continuously develop its employees. Therefore, senior management is the one that seeks organizational distinction through the organizations' ability to contribute strategically by excelling in their performance, solving their problems, and then achieving their goals more effectively than other organizations.

Ninth: Presentation and analysis of the correlations and influence between the research variables

In order to test the research plan and its hypotheses to identify correlations in the main dimensions and sub variables, the validity of the hypotheses will be verified through the use of a number of statistical tools and methods that were chosen to conduct the analysis on the study variables and through the following: Analyzing the

correlations between the study variables at the macro and micro levels. The content of this relationship represents the pursuit of the extent to which the main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses have been achieved. Table 3 displays the results of analyzing the correlation values between organizational learning and organizational differentiation. The results at the overall level demonstrate the presence of a high moral correlation between them, reflected by the correlation coefficient of (0.72) at the level Significant (0.01). Table 3 also displays the results of analyzing the correlation values between the dimensions of organizational learning and organizational differentiation. The results at the micro level show the existence of a high moral correlation between them, reflected by the correlation coefficient of (0.78) for the strategic dimension, which ranked first while the organizational dimension ranked second with a correlation coefficient of (0.68), while the cultural dimension ranked third with a correlation coefficient of (0.71). These results indicate the strength of the correlation between organizational learning and its dimensions with achieving organizational distinction in the organization in question. Based on the above, we can take With the main and secondary alternative hypotheses, which state that there is a strong moral connection at the macro and micro levels, and therefore, organizational learning and its dimensions have an important role in enhancing organizational differentiation through the ability of the university administration to achieve the goals of organizational learning and its future directions, and this is what organizations seek by improving their overall capabilities and developing... itself. And also the exchange of information, ideas, skills, and the accumulation of knowledge, which in turn leads to expanding opportunities for formulating permanent, beneficial work links that can help the effective and continuous flow of information between the various organizational levels of the organization, which makes it significantly distinct.

Table 3: Results of the correlation between organizational learning and organizational excellence

	Organizational learning	Strategic dimension	Cultural dimension	Organizational dimension
Organizational excellence	0.72*	0.78*	0.68*	0.71*

N=50, *p>0.01

Source: Prepared by the researcher in light of the results of the electronic calculator

The coefficient of determination (impact) reached (0.44). This means that (44%) of the explained differences in the dimensions of organizational learning combined are due to the influence of organizational discrimination combined, and (66%) of the remainder are due to random variables that cannot be controlled or are not included. In the regression chart.

Table 4: Results of an impact relationship between organizational learning and organizational excellence

	Organizational learning
Organizational excellence	0.44*

N=50, *p>0.01

Source: Prepared by the researcher in light of the results of the electronic calculator

Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusions

- Organizational learning has an important role in

promoting the achievement of organizational excellence through the university administration's capabilities to achieve the goals of organizational learning and its future directions.

- The researched organization has great organizational learning and a level of culture, ambition, and reaching planned future goals in light of the learning capabilities possessed by the leaders.
- Organizational learning has great importance in achieving organizational differentiation in the organization under study through the integration of its basic dimensions.
- The results of the analysis indicated that there is a strong and significant correlation between the organizational learning variables and the organizational differentiation variables.
- The results also indicated that there is a strong correlation at the level of variables, especially with the strategic dimension and then the organizational and

cultural dimension. This indicates that the organization is increasing its effectiveness in achieving organizational differentiation.

Suggestions

- The university administration must precisely define the learning objectives and its future directions in a way that contributes to achieving its organizational distinction by adopting organizational learning data.
- The researched organization adopts training and development programs with the aim of increasing development and innovation, and this contributes to the acquisition of cumulative knowledge among individuals and workers.
- The need to encourage management and workers to become familiar with ways of working in a higher learning environment and to know the changes that occur in it.
- Increasing the organization's ability to achieve organizational differentiation through its ability to contribute strategically by excelling in its performance, solving its problems, and achieving its goals effectively.
- The need for the organization to increase cultural awareness in the organization due to the low correlation with organizational discrimination.

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