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Needs Assessment for Proposed OD Interventions to Improve a Learning Organization: A Case Study of University Administrative Staff in China

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Abstract

Learning Organization is the key to organizational success, especially in the fast-changing environments where innovation drives change. Higher education is evolving rapidly in today's global connectivity, technological advances, and student diversity. The future of education will be very different from how we are experiencing today. HIU is the research site for this study, with a total number of 80 as the participants of this study, involving ten teaching and 24 administrative departments. The objective of this study is to identify priority needs for OD interventions. Two research instruments employed in this study comprised 1) a 30-question structured questionnaire and 2) 4-interview questions. This study employed descriptive statistics and content analysis. In the end, this research found that the current and desired situation of the HIU administrative staff learning behavior based on learning organization theory, and identified the order of priority needs for HIU administrative staff learning organization, and also proposed an initial OD program essential for learning organization for administrative staff. Key results indicated significant discrepancies between current and ideal states across all measured variables. Organizational Culture and Organizational Norms were identified as the highest-priority improvement areas, underscoring deficiencies in cross-departmental collaboration and psychological safety. The proposed OD interventions focus on three strategic areas: cultural transformation, collaborative learning infrastructure, and vision alignment.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Needs Assessments, University's Administrative Staff

Introduction

Learning Organization is the key to organizational success, especially in the fast-changing environments where innovation drives change (López et al., 2006). In the context of today's global connectivity, technological advancements, and diverse student populations, higher education is undergoing rapid transformation (Bal & Erkan, 2019). Colleges and

universities play an important role in imparting knowledge and cultivating and unleashing the potential of their staff, who are regarded as the future talents for the workplace and marketplace (Miller, 2021). The mission and tasks of the administrative staff of universities invariably contribute to the overall quality of teaching and talent development.

Background of the study

Heilongjiang International University (HIU) is a comprehensive university with ten teaching and 24 administrative departments: 150 administrative personnel, including the administrative officers, counselors, academic affairs office, student work office, and finance office. Daily, HIU maintains an open and inclusive working atmosphere. Unlike teaching staff, administrative staff must go to school every working day, so they are relatively familiar with each other, and in case of problems, they help and consult each other to share knowledge and resources in their work.

Current Situation

With increased societal expectations and requirements, university administrators are pressured to advance their educational management and development in various aspects, including routine work within the department, from mastering communication skills, improving knowledge, and increasing enrollment to strengthening computer knowledge. HIU provides relevant skills training for administrative personnel of different functional departments according to needs.

University administrative staff are distributed across a multitude of positions, including counselors, personnel office staff, international affairs officers, academic affairs administrators, academics, engineering department personnel, secretaries, and others. However, in the present context of HIU, the majority of the staff's academic majors bear little relevance to their actual job responsibilities. Consequently, administrators are compelled to continuously acquire new knowledge and skills. There exists a dearth of horizontal communication and cooperation among various school departments. Occasionally, issues such as staff redundancy or shortages may arise. Moreover, in multiple aspects, the absence of clear-cut regulations detrimentally affects the overall operational flow of the school. Given that the school is currently in a developmental phase, evaluations across diverse fronts occur with regularity. Nevertheless, certain administrative staff demonstrate a feeble eagerness to learn, lack congruent work goals, and have not yet cultivated a cohesive institutional culture.

Statement of the problem

Private colleges inevitably face more pressure and competition than public colleges in China. The reform of the new college entrance examination policy and the influence of the recent global pandemic invariably affect college graduates' enrollment and employment rate, ultimately requiring the administrators to revisit their abilities to provide consistent quality education to meet the changing policy and marketplaces.

This study aims to develop an initial proposal on organization development interventions that systematically develop a learning organization culture within HIU, allowing

administrative staff to share results and learning experiences. The phases of this research work comprised analyzing and exploring factors that affect employees' learning ability at individual, team, and organization levels, and lastly, formulating the organization development interventions, leading to the activation of learning organization.

Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. To examine the current and desired situation of the HIU administrative staff learning behavior based on learning organization theory.
2. To identify the order of priority needs for HIU administrative staff learning organization.
3. To explore ideas of administrative staff on improving learning organization through interviews.
4. To propose an initial OD program essential for learning organization for administrative staff.

Research Questions

1. What are the current and desired situation of the HIU administrative staff learning behavior based on learning organization theory?
2. What are the priority needs for the learning organization of HIU administrative staff?
3. What are the key themes on improving learning organization based on interviews of administrative staff?
4. What initial OD program could be proposed to improve a learning organization among administrative staff?

Significance of the study

This study focuses on HIU, with all college administrative staff invited to participate. Its findings are expected to yield positive organizational impacts across four dimensions. First, at the university level, applying learning organization principles to practice will enhance work efficiency, streamline workflows, and advance the college's overall development— additionally aligning faculty and administrators around shared goals to mitigate brain drain. Second, for administrative offices, staff adoption of learning organization concepts will drive continuous improvement in professional knowledge and operational competence, foster lifelong learning and knowledge-sharing habits, and lay a foundation for long-term personal development. Third, for faculty, improved administrative capabilities will better support teachers in addressing non-teaching tasks (e.g., student management, administrative coordination, research administration), while enabling knowledge exchange between teachers and administrators to achieve mutual progress.

Literature Review & Research Framework

Learning Organization

Senge's (1993) bestselling book, "The Fifth Discipline," the learning organization concept, introduced the learning organization as a suitable organizational format considering the growing global economic environment. Per Learning Organization Theory (Senge, 1993), and organizational interventions are typically used to produce a positive change in an organization. Through a synthesis of four seminal models of learning organizations—proposed respectively by Senge (1993), Garvin (1993), Watkins and Marsick (1993), and Marquardt—the authors contend that the core factors shaping a learning organization primarily encompass four dimensions: organizational norms, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and common vision.

Organization Norms

Feldman adopted Hackman's definition of group norms in his research on the formation and enforcement of these norms, describing them as informal rules that groups establish to regulate and standardize the behavior of their members. He further explained that groups enforce these norms to ensure their survival, enhance the predictability of member behavior, and minimize interpersonal discomfort. Norms serve as a mechanism to achieve these objectives. Additionally, Feldman's study revealed that norms are more likely to be enforced when they align with the group's core values and contribute to its collective identity. They guide the interaction among members of a group, as well as the interactions of the group with its environment (Ellison et al., 2020).

Substantive learning that is collectively constructed for organization members to learn on the job and through different opportunities as ongoing education and growth. Through various human resources strategies, such as salary and bonus, performance appraisal, talent promotion, training, etc., the organization stimulates employees' enthusiasm for work and learning, and improves employees' innovative learning ability. In an organization, perfect organizational norms can help leaders better manage internal employees and provide guarantee for employee development.

Organization Culture

According to Bui and Baruch (2010) model, the antecedents of mental models are leadership and organizational culture. Leadership in the higher education context means creation of such an organizational culture that would allow teachers, students and parents to form a team that learns together (Schein, 1992).

This definition encompasses a wide range of phenomena, including organizational operations, wage structures, interpersonal relationships among employees, and attitudes toward them. Hatch emphasized that a shared culture does not imply uniformity in cultural experiences or understanding among all members. Instead, culture accommodates both similarities and differences, fostering a collective cultural perception through the interplay of these elements. In other words, culture does not require employees to think or feel identically within an

organization but rather creates a shared understanding by embracing their diverse perspectives and commonalities (Rossi, 2006).

Organization Commitment

Organizational commitment is a critical strategy for fostering successful innovation by embracing and spreading new ideas and practices. It involves both management and interpersonal communication, enabling members to understand and engage with changes in policies, strategies, and directives. When employees are provided with clear and relevant information about their tasks and organizational changes, they gain a deeper understanding of the change process.

Barker and Camarata emphasized that in learning organizations, all forms of organizational commitment play a vital role, particularly in rapidly changing environments. Organizational commitment fosters development by generating insights and facilitating consensus on necessary changes. In organizations with strong commitment, individuals and the organization as a whole become more open to change, enhancing their understanding of what it means to be a learning organization (Kuźmicz, 2015).

Common Vision

The antecedents of a common vision are leadership and organisational culture, moderators are: sector, size of higher education and communication. Depending on the ownership (private or public) there will be different goals and common vision of a higher education. The awareness of the vision is dependent on efficiency of communication which naturally is more effective in a smaller university than in a big organization. The effect of a common vision despite improvement of group functioning is individual and organizational success (Zipple, 2001).

The extent to which an organization's goals coincide with those of its employees is reflected by the scope of a shared vision. When there is alignment between the goals of organizational members and the organization itself, the cohesion among employees tends to be enhanced.

Theoretical Frameworks

Within the learning organization literature, four learning organization models were prominent. First, Senge (1993) strongly emphasized the role of systems in managing change to become a learning organization. Second, Garvin (1993) emphasizes that a learning organization is good at creating knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, and transferring knowledge. Third, Watkins and Marsick look at building a learning organization through the elements of people and structure and seven dimensions that also emphasize systems focus. Finally, Marquardt highlights five areas of focus when becoming a learning organization and utilizes the systems view, the importance of culture, and the levels and types of learning.

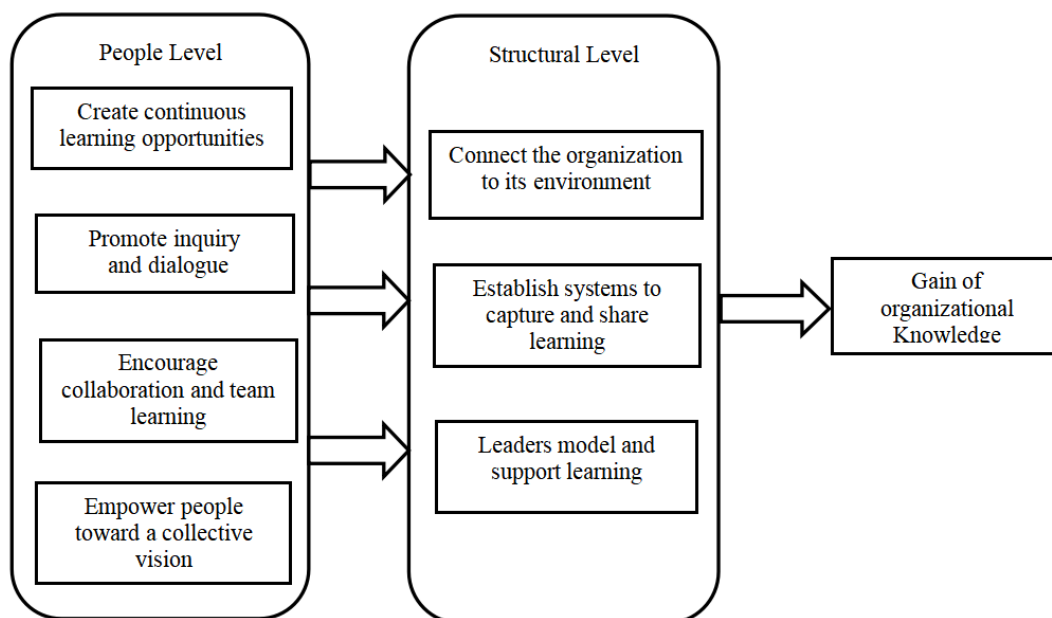
Regarding Watkins and Marsick (1993), organizational learning is divided into three levels: At the individual level, there exist two dimensions of organizational learning, namely continuous learning and dialogue exploration. Subsequently, at the team or group level, it is

manifested through collective learning and collaboration. Moving on to the organizational level, it encompasses four dimensions of organizational learning, which are embedded systems, system connectivity, authorization, as well as providing leadership for learning. These three levels can be further regarded as belonging to one of the two constituents within Watkins and Marsic's model of a Learning Organization. The first constituent stands for the individuals who form an organization, while the second one symbolizes the structures and culture fabricated by the social institution of the organization. Theories regarding learning organizations have consistently emphasized that engaging with people at the individual and group levels constitutes the primary task that an organization must undertake (Jain & Moreno, 2015).

People also need to be equipped to take learning initiatives. "In other words, first individuals learn as individuals, but in the organizational change they align together, they learn as teams, clusters, networks, and larger units." It was also thought that learning activities at the structural level could perform a clarifying role (Harrison, 2000). They do this by filtering individual and group learning and integrating it into the organization's mission or final performance results. Even though individuals begin to change themselves as a result of their learning, the organization needs to create supportive structures. These structures should both contribute to learning and gain from it, so as to move forward in achieving its mission.

Figure 1

The Theoretical Framework of The Learning Organization



Watkins and Marsick (1993) developed the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), a self-reported questionnaire with 43 items. The original 43-item questionnaire was later amended to 21 questions (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). As Yang, Watkins, and Marsick explained, "The seven-factor model was lengthy and did not fit the data well because a considerable portion of item variation (one-quarter) could not be explained by

the proposed dimensions of the learning organization” (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2017). This process involved generating an item pool “based on behavioral evidence of each dimension identified in their research on learning organizations”.

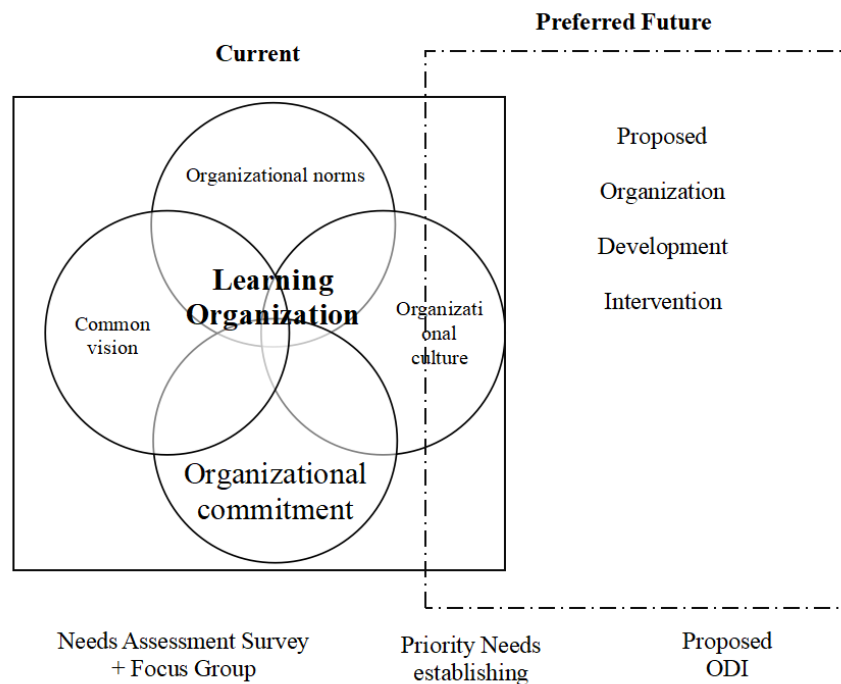
According to the subdimensions of the DLOQ, the researcher believe that continuous learning, system connectivity, and embedded systems are closely related to the contextual mechanisms that lead to learning organizations. On the contrary, dialogue and exploration, team learning, empowerment, and strategic leadership are related to the organizational learning process. The effective learning organization model of Marsick and Watkin is considered a model that can unite personnel and organizational structure, contribute to continuous learning and encourage organizational change.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework as illustrated in the Figure 2 below comprises four-standalone variables, consisting of organizational norms, organizational culture, organizational commitment and common vision. The choices of these variables were drawn from the learning organization model by Peter Senge and Watkins and Marsick's learning organization model. The proposed organization development intervention was not the dependent variable to be examined statistically, but the expected output of the study whereby the researcher proposed a set of organization development intervention, drawn from the analyzed data of the four main variables (Richman, 1983).

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework



Based on the variable factors within the structural framework, researchers are required to design measurable operational questions according to the constituent elements of each variable. Through the method of a questionnaire survey, the differences between the current situation and expectations are explored, so as to determine the priority of the needs for establishing a learning organization. In order to optimize the design of operational questions, researchers have referred to the evaluation scale for learning organizations developed by Professors Zhou and Zheng (2017) from National Central University in Taiwan. They have selected the content that is consistent with the independent variables and systematically sorted out and improved the operational questions.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research employs a mixed-methods design: quantitative and qualitative data collection. The quantitative data is collected through an online structured questionnaire from administrators of the same level in different college departments. Data from the online structured questionnaire is used to assess the needs for individual learning and working behavior in the organization. The qualitative data is obtained from all the administrative staff of the English department through a focus group discussion to allow a more in-depth understanding of their perspectives on the college's learning organizational behavior and its importance.

Research instrument

This research employs two different instruments: a structured questionnaire and a focus group.

Structured questionnaire

To address Research Questions 1, 2, and 3, an online structured questionnaire was used to collect respondents' data, which included information on the current and preferred status of an organization's learning behavior needs as well as priority needs indexes; this data enabled statistical analysis to identify significant differences between the current and preferred statuses and rank the needs for behavioral changes to co-create a learning organization. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: first, demographic questions; second, statements or actual questions regarding the current and expected status of relevant variables; and third, questions soliciting suggestions for improving learning behavior. It adopted two-sided 5-point Likert scales (for current and desired statuses), which are qualitative rating scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The results of Item Objective Congruence

Three experts provided their opinions and recommendations for the IOC. The results for each question met the IOC standard value (>0.66). The overall IOC results met the requirements.

Reliability Testing

The Cronbach's Alpha results from the reliability test done for the pilot test with 30 respondents. The test consists of two parts, one is the test on the current situation of learning organization, and the other is on the desired importance of learning organization. All of the variables have Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.7. This means that all the items under each factor in the survey questionnaire are reliable ranging from acceptable to very good levels of internal consistency.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Results of current situation

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
Organizational Norms	4	0.779	Reliable (Acceptable)
Organizational Culture	4	0.771	Reliable (Acceptable)
Organizational Commitment	4	0.825	Reliable (Very Good)
Common Vision	4	0.841	Reliable (Very Good)
Learning Organization	4	0.822	Reliable (Very Good)

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Results of expected situation

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
Organizational Norms	4	0.793	Reliable (Acceptable)
Organizational Culture	4	0.892	Reliable (Very Good)
Organizational Commitment	4	0.861	Reliable (Very Good)
Common Vision	4	0.785	Reliable (Acceptable)
Learning Organization	4	0.854	Reliable (Very Good)

Focus-group

For fulfilling research question 4, the focus group interview is employed to explore the informants' insights on learning behavior. Four open-ended questions are formulated to generate the conversations with the participating informants.

Below are the questions for focus group interview or discussion:

1. What does learning mean to you? What does HIU learning behavior mean to you?
2. Could you please describe the best experience while working in HIU when you felt most fruitful and improved? How did that positively affect you?
3. Imagine your ideal organization that good learning atmosphere and fully support learning behavior. What does it look like? How do the teams and colleagues work together? What type of support does the organization offer? What are the strengths that enable you to become more active in learning?
4. What can you do to enhance learning behavior? Where would you be willing to start from?

Eight executives from English department who have worked in HIU for more than ten years will participate in the interview. Content analysis was conducted by three coders to generate the themes from the data obtained during the focus group discussion.

Population and Sample

The target population and sample of this study is the administrative staff of HIU, comprising ten teaching and 24 administrative departments. All departments combined totaled 150 administrative staff who hold various roles, namely administrative officers, counselors, academic affairs office, student work office, and finance office.

The research employs purposive sampling for the structured questionnaire is 80 respondents representing various departments for the structured questionnaire. In this study, the population consists of 150 individuals. Using stratified random sampling, 80 participants (53.3%) were selected as the sample. According to the sample size table proposed, when the population size (N) is 150, the recommended sample size is 86. Applying the finite population correction formula and allowing a margin of error to be expanded to 7%, the calculated minimum sample size is 80, which meets statistical requirements. Additionally, this sample size aligns with the needs of exploratory analyses for small-scale populations, as referenced in comparable studies.

With the continuous development of the school, many young administrative staff have been recruited. In the process of selecting participants, in order to ensure a better understanding of the current situation and development of the school. The researchers selected administrative employees who have worked at HIU for over 5 years as the research subjects.

The research employs purposive sampling for the focus group interview to explore insights of the eight informants from the English department administrators. According to Creswell, the minimum sample size for a phenomenology study should be between 5-30 people for the individual-group interview.

The selection criteria for the eight informants include

1) The administrative staff of the English department who successfully passed various professional evaluations and professional certifications in Heilongjiang Province.

2) The administrative staff of the English department who have worked in HIU for ten years, understood the culture and history of HIU, and are willing to share their views and opinions on the future development of the college.

Data analysis and juxtaposing data

The data analysis and juxtaposing data will be carried out as follows:

First, Descriptive statistics are used to analyze the current and preferred situation to describe the demographic profiles and the frequency of the responses.

Second, the Priority Needs Index (PNIModified) determines the ranking based on the mean differences. The formula for PNIModified calculation is $(I-D)/D$. D =Current Situation, I =Preferred/Expected situation.

Third, the contents analysis inter-coding triangulation by three coders is employed for the focus-group discussion or interview.

Finally, the juxtaposing data is carried out by bridging the findings from the T-test and PNIModified ranking with the themes emerged from the contents analysis inter-coding to make the conclusion of the study and propose a set of Organization development intervention for the participating organization.

Results

Demographic Information

In this study, the 80 valid samples were collected. The background variables include gender, age, years of service and level of education.

Table 3

Demographic Information of Samples

Variable	Category	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	33	45%
	Female	47	55%
	Total	80	100%
Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	43	53%
	Master's Degree	27	34%
	Doctor's Degree	10	13%
	Total	80	100%
Age	18-30 Years Old	16	20%
	31-40 Years Old	32	40%

Variable	Category	N	Percentage
	41-50 Years Old	28	35%
	Above 50 Years Old	4	5%
	Total	80	100%
Years of Service	1-5 years	14	17%
	6-9 years	38	48%
	10 years or above	28	35%
	Total	80	100%

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

In this section, the descriptive statistics for all the variables included in the study need to be analyzed and showed. The descriptive statistics utilized depends on the data type of the variables. The required information for all variables is the central tendency and variabilities of the variables. A higher PNIModified value indicates a larger gap between current and desired conditions, reflecting a higher developmental priority.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and PNIModified: Organizational Norms

Item Statement		Current Situation (D)			Expected Situation (I)			PNIModified
		Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation	(I-D)/D
1	I regard personal learning as part of my work at the college.	3.28	.431	Neutral	4.58	.592	Strongly Agree	0.40 (Rank 1)
2	The college provides me with sufficient resources to support various learning activities.	3.82	.431	Agree	4.32	.468	Strongly Agree	0.13 (Rank 4)
3	The college attaches importance to the training and development of my core competitiveness, professional ability, and creativity.	3.61	.619	Agree	4.30	.557	Strongly Agree	0.19 (Rank 3)
4	The college's various human resources strategies support my innovative learning.	3.51	.721	Agree	4.48	.592	Strongly Agree	0.27 (Rank 2)
Total		3.52	.629	Agree	4.36	.513	Strongly Agree	0.24

Based on the result from table, for current situation of organizational norms, the mean is between 3.28 and 3.82. The whole questions means for this variable is 3.52. For expected situation of organizational norms, the mean is between 4.3 and 4.58. The whole questions means for this variable is 4.36.

When it comes to the ranking of priority needs index using PNIModified, the first ranking was Q1 with a 0.40 PNIModified, followed by Q4 with a 0.27 PNIModified, followed by Q3 with a 0.19 PNIModified, and lastly Q2 with a 0.13 PNIModified.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and PNIModified: Organizational Culture

Item Statement		Current Situation (D)			Expected Situation (I)			PNIModified
		Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation	(I-D)D
1	I care about my colleagues and enjoy working together.	3.05	0.490	Neutral	4.49	.611	Strongly Agree	0.47 (Rank 1)
2	The college encourages group and team learning in various ways.	3.36	0.418	Neutral	4.32	.432	Strongly Agree	0.29 (Rank 2)
3	I have the opportunity to work with other executives.	3.68	0.601	Agree	4.30	.533	Strongly Agree	0.17 (Rank 3)
4	The college has a corporate culture of continuous learning and continuous improvement.	3.40	0.714	Agree	4.38	.561	Strongly Agree	0.29 (Rank 2)
Total		3.45	0.577	Agree	4.36	.529	Strongly Agree	0.26

Based on the result from table, for current situation of Organizational Culture, the mean is between 3.05 and 3.68. The whole questions means for this variable is 3.45. For expected situation of Organizational Culture, the mean is between 4.32 and 4.49. The whole questions means for this variable is 4.38.

When it comes to the ranking of priority needs index using PNIModified, the first ranking was Q1 with a 0.47 PNIModified, followed by Q2 and Q4 with a 0.29 PNIModified, and lastly Q3 with a 0.17 PNIModified.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics and PNIModified: Organizational Commitment

Item Statement		Current Situation (D)			Expected Situation (I)			PNIModified
		Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation	(I-D)D
1	I can have a professional dialogue of mutual respect and trust with my colleagues.	3.67	0.524	Agree	4.27	.527	Strongly Agree	0.16 (Rank 3)
2	The communication between all departments of the college and the upper and lower levels is very smooth.	3.90	0.403	Agree	4.10	.494	Strongly Agree	0.05 (Rank 4)

Item Statement		Current Situation (D)			Expected Situation (I)			PNIModified
		Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation	(I-D)D
3	I can give feedback and express my position without scruples.	3.68	0.590	Agree	4.43	.562	Strongly Agree	0.20 (Rank 2)
4	I often reflect and dare to admit my mistakes.	3.09	0.767	Neutral	4.47	.527	Strongly Agree	0.45 (Rank 1)
Total		3.64	0.599	Agree	4.31	.494	Strongly Agree	0.18

Based on the result from table, for current situation of Organizational Commitment, the mean is between 3.64 and 3.90. The whole questions means for this variable is 3.64. For expected situation of Organizational Commitment, the mean is between 4.10 and 4.47. The whole questions means for this variable is 4.31.

When it comes to the ranking of priority needs index using PNIModified, the first ranking was Q4 with a 0.45 PNIModified, followed by Q3 with a 0.20 PNIModified, followed by Q1 with a 0.16 PNIModified, and lastly Q2 with a 0.05 PNIModified.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics and PNIModified: Common Vision

Item Statement		Current Situation (D)			Expected Situation (I)			PNIModified
		Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation	(I-D)D
1	I understand the future development goal of the college.	3.38	0.546	Neutral	4.49	.601	Strongly Agree	0.33 (Rank 2)
2	Major events of the college need to be discussed and agreed upon by all.	4.16	0.388	Agree	4.27	.446	Strongly Agree	0.03 (Rank 4)
3	Continuous learning is one of the common visions of our college.	3.61	0.568	Agree	4.40	.523	Strongly Agree	0.22 (Rank 3)
4	The college attaches importance to the personal vision of its members and strives to reach an agreement between the organizational vision and the personal vision.	3.33	0.714	Neutral	4.51	.601	Strongly Agree	0.35 (Rank 1)
Total		3.87	0.684	Agree	4.38	.446	Strongly Agree	0.13

Based on the result from table, for current situation of Common Vision, the mean is between 3.33 and 4.16. The whole questions means for this variable is 3.87. For expected situation of Common Vision, the mean is between 4.3 and 4.51. The whole questions means for this variable is 4.38.

When it comes to the ranking of priority needs index using PNIModified, the first ranking was Q4 with a 0.35 PNIModified, followed by Q1 with a 0.33 PNIModified, followed by Q3 with a 0.22 PNIModified, and lastly Q2 with a 0.03 PNIModified.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics and PNIModified: Learning Organization

Item Statement		Current Situation (D)			Expected Situation (I)			PNIModified
		Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation	(I-D)D
1	In my college, people help and learn from each other.	3.71	0.504	Agree	4.58	.592	Strongly Agree	0.23 (Rank 3)
2	In my college, I provide necessary learning and training to employees.	3.82	0.440	Agree	4.32	.468	Strongly Agree	0.13 (Rank 4)
3	In my college, When I express my point of view, I usually ask for other people's opinions and ideas.	3.21	0.607	Neutral	4.30	.557	Strongly Agree	0.34 (Rank 2)
4	The college appreciates those employees who are full of initiative, pioneering, and innovative spirit.	3.23	0.721	Neutral	4.48	.592	Strongly Agree	0.39 (Rank 1)
Total		3.50	0.588	Agree	4.32	.468	Strongly Agree	0.23

Based on the result from table, for current situation of Learning Organization, the mean is between 3.21 and 3.82. The whole questions means for this variable is 3.50. For expected situation of Learning Organization, the mean is between 4.31 and 4.59. The whole questions means for this variable is 4.33.

The mean of whole questions is 4.33, that means the expected situation of Learning Organization toward HIU administrators is high, and those staff are strongly agree with the question toward this variable with expected situation.

Qualitative Data Results— Focus group interview

Qualitative data were collected using focus group interviews. Eight administrative staff members from the English department who have been working in the school for about ten years were invited to participate. In-depth exchanges were conducted with them around four interview questions. Each respondent gave their opinion on four questions. The answers to these questions were then coded by three experts, and finally the conclusions from the qualitative data were unified.

Question 1: What does learning mean to you? What does HIU learning behavior mean to you?

Upon the completion of contents analysis by three coders, there are two themes emerged discovered from the eight interviewees as follows:

Theme 1: Continuous Learning and Mastery of new knowledge.

Respondents generally believe that learning at work is a continuous process of learning and mastering new knowledge. This viewpoint not only reveals the attitude of professionals towards learning, but also reveals the importance of continuous learning in the workplace.

Theme 2: Continuously improving knowledge and abilities.

Respondents generally believe that by learning in the workplace, they not only acquire new knowledge and skills, but also continuously update their knowledge system and keep up with the times.

Question 2: Could you please describe the best experience while working in HIU when you felt most fruitful and improved? How did that positively affect you?

Upon the completion of contents analysis by three coders, there are two themes emerged discovered from the eight interviewees as follows:

Theme 1: Cross-Functional Departments Involvement

Cross functional involvement means that employees from different departments and functions can break down barriers and work together to complete a task or project. This collaborative model not only facilitates the flow of information and resource sharing, but also stimulates employees' innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Theme 2: Communication and Mutual Understanding

Communication is not just about conveying information, but more importantly, establishing a foundation for mutual understanding. Mutual understanding means being able to think from the perspective of others, understand their needs and expectations. This understanding not only enhances team cohesion, but also stimulates the creativity and innovative spirit of team members. When each member can feel respected and understood, they are more likely to devote themselves wholeheartedly to their work and contribute to the development of the organization.

Question 3: Imagine your ideal organization that good learning atmosphere and fully support learning behavior. What does it look like? How do the teams and colleagues work together? What type of support does the organization offer? What are the strengths that enable you to become more active in learning?

Upon the completion of contents analysis by three coders, there are two themes emerged discovered from the eight interviewees as follows:

Theme 1: Clear and unified organizational goals

When employees have a clear understanding of the organization's goals and firmly believe that these goals are achievable and meaningful, their work motivation and sense of belonging will be greatly enhanced.

Theme 2: A positive and upward organizational culture

This culture can stimulate the inner potential of employees, encourage them to face challenges, continue to learn and grow, and contribute to the development of the organization.

At the same time, a positive and upward organizational culture can also enhance the cohesion and centripetal force of the organization, allowing employees to develop a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization.

Question 4: What can you do to enhance learning behavior? Where would you be willing to start from?

Upon the completion of contents analysis by three coders, there are two themes emerged discovered from the eight interviewees as follows:

Theme 1: Set learning goals and plans

Setting clear learning goals and plans boosts organizational efficiency via upskilled teams. It also enhances employees’ competence and career growth, fostering mutual development.

Theme 2: Seek opinions and support from others

Seeking others' opinions and support enriches organizational decision-making. It empowers employees, boosts engagement, and drives collaborative, sustainable development.

Juxtaposition of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The table presentation below illustrates the traces between needs assessment results with ranking which were drawn from the structured questionnaire and thematic development drawn from the contents analysis.

Table 9

Needs Assessment Results

Main Variable	PNIModified (Ranking)	Themes
Organizational Culture	0.26 (Rank 1)	Theme 1: Communication and Mutual Understanding Theme 2: A positive and upward organizational culture
Organizational Norms	0.24 (Rank 2)	Theme 1: Cross-Functional Departments Involvement
Learning Organization	0.23 (Rank 3)	Theme 1: Continuous Learning and Mastery of new knowledge. Theme 2: Continuously improving knowledge and abilities.
Organizational Commitment	0.18 (Rank 4)	Theme 1: Seek opinions and support from others
Common Vision	0.13 (Rank 5)	Theme 1: Clear and unified organizational goals Theme 2: Set learning goals and plans

Discussion of Juxtaposed Findings

The juxtaposition reveals that the highest priority need (Organizational Culture, PNI=0.26) is strongly supported by qualitative themes emphasizing communication and positive culture. Similarly, the second-ranked need (Organizational Norms, PNI=0.24) reflects qualitative concerns about cross-departmental collaboration. Notably, while Common Vision ranked lowest quantitatively (PNI=0.13), qualitative themes stressed its importance for long-term cohesion. According to the above, it was found that these elements are closely related,

influencing and promoting each other, collectively forming the core elements of a learning organization.

Proposed ODI

Design Process of Proposed ODI

1. Strengthening Organizational Culture

Cultural Workshops and Training: Conduct workshops that focus on HIU's core values, mission, and vision, ensuring that all administrative staff understand and align with the institution's cultural expectations.

Leadership Development Programs: Develop programs for leaders and managers that emphasize the importance of cultural leadership, ensuring that they model and reinforce the desired culture in their daily interactions.

Communication Enhancement: Implement channels for open and consistent communication that promote transparency and inclusivity. This can include regular town hall meetings, suggestion boxes, and feedback mechanisms to ensure that all staff feel heard and valued.

2. Enhancing Organizational Commitment

Career Development Plans: Create personalized career development plans for administrative staff that outline clear career paths, potential for growth, and opportunities for professional development within the organization.

Recognition and Rewards Programs: Develop a system for recognizing and rewarding staff achievements, both formally and informally, to foster a sense of belonging and commitment to the organization.

Employee Engagement Initiatives: Introduce initiatives that encourage greater employee engagement, such as team-building activities, mentorship programs, and peer support groups.

3. Fostering a Shared Vision

Vision Alignment Workshops: Organize workshops where staff can discuss and contribute to the university's vision, helping them understand how their roles align with the broader goals of the institution.

Strategic Planning Involvement: Involve administrative staff in the strategic planning process to give them a sense of ownership and responsibility for the university's future direction.

Continuous Communication of Vision: Regularly communicate the university's vision through various platforms, ensuring it is visible and understood at all levels of the organization.

Conclusions and Discussion

Summary of Key Findings

Key results indicated significant discrepancies between current and ideal states across all measured variables. Organizational Culture (PNIModified=0.26) and Organizational Norms (PNIModified=0.24) were identified as the highest-priority improvement areas, underscoring

deficiencies in cross-departmental collaboration and psychological safety. These findings resonate with Senge's (1993) emphasis on team learning dynamics and Watkins and Marsick (1993) Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), which highlight the critical role of open communication and supportive environments. Notably, HIU administrative staff emphasized the necessity of systematically integrating learning into daily workflows, a finding consistent with López et al.'s research on adaptive learning in dynamic organizational contexts.

The proposed OD interventions focus on three strategic areas: cultural transformation, collaborative learning infrastructure, and vision alignment. For example, initiatives to strengthen Organizational Culture directly target the gap in horizontal communication (Mean Current = 3.45 vs. Mean Ideal = 4.38), while interventions for Organizational Commitment address shortcomings in reflective practice routines (Mean Current = 3.09 vs. Mean Ideal = 4.47).

Synthesized Contributions

Methodological: This study showcases the effectiveness of mixed - methods research in validating findings. By integrating quantitative data, such as Priority Need Index (PNI) scores, with qualitative insights, including cultural narratives, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. This triangulation approach strengthens the reliability and validity of the study's conclusions.

Practical: The research offers a prioritized organizational development (OD) guide specifically tailored for private universities. It recommends a two - pronged strategy: implementing immediate cultural interventions, such as workshop series, to achieve quick results, while simultaneously pursuing systemic reforms of organizational norms, like introducing performance - linked learning credits. This balanced approach aims to drive sustainable change within the institutional context.

Theoretical: The study extends the application of learning organization theory beyond academic roles. It highlights administrative staff as key yet often underappreciated contributors to institutional learning. By recognizing their significance, the research enriches the existing theoretical framework, suggesting new directions for future studies on organizational learning dynamics.

Recommendations based on the findings

The theory of "learning organization" aims to stimulate the endogenous development motivation of administrative staff, with the goal of meeting the development needs of administrative staff, focusing on the overall and active human object, and emphasizing self transcendence, shared vision, teamwork, and systematic thinking in the process of administrative staff development. So, from the perspective of learning organizations, the development of university administrative staff needs to update their concepts, establish the concept of lifelong learning and self transcendence, and create common goals, strengthen communication, interaction, and collaborative learning among the administrative staff team, build a common vision, innovate the operating mechanism of the administrative staff team, and

think comprehensively and systematically design administrative staff training to cultivate administrative staff' comprehensive literacy.

Private universities like HIU face unique challenges, including resource constraints, high staff turnover, and the need to balance market competitiveness with educational quality. The following recommendations are tailored to address these realities while leveraging the study's findings to foster a sustainable learning organization.

1. Cultural Workshops and Leadership Training

The study identified significant gaps in cross-department collaboration (Current Mean = 3.45) and feedback mechanisms (Mean=3.09), reflecting siloed workflows and a lack of psychological safety. To address these challenges, monthly cross-departmental workshops should be implemented, utilizing internal facilitators such as senior administrators or faculty with organizational development expertise. These workshops will focus on breaking down silos through cost-effective, high-impact activities, such as Scenario-Based Role-Playing, Peer Feedback Circles, Concurrently, leadership training for mid-level managers (e.g., department heads) should emphasize adaptive leadership techniques, including Psychological Safety and Flat Communication

This integrated approach addresses both systemic barriers (silos) and cultural gaps (fear of feedback), fostering a collaborative, adaptive learning organization tailored to the unique dynamics of private higher education.

2. Resource Allocation for Learning Integration

The study identified a critical gap in learning resource accessibility (PNIModified=0.24), with staff highlighting insufficient access to training materials and knowledge-sharing tools. To address this, the implementation of a digital knowledge-sharing platform is proposed. This initiative will leverage widely adopted, low-cost platforms such as WeChat Work or DingTalk (already prevalent in Chinese workplaces) to create dedicated channels for Best Practice Repositories, Microlearning Modules, Gamification

This solution not only addresses immediate resource gaps but also fosters a culture of continuous learning, critical for maintaining competitiveness in the dynamic landscape of private higher education.

3. Vision Co-Creation Initiatives

The study revealed a significant misalignment between staff aspirations and institutional goals (Current Mean=3.33 vs. Expected = 4.51), indicating a disconnect between individual motivations and HIU's strategic direction. To bridge this gap, biannual visioning retreats are proposed, structured as Pre-Retreat Surveys, Interactive Sessions, Theoretical Alignment.

This initiative not only resolves vision misalignment but also cultivates a culture of shared purpose, essential for sustaining innovation and agility in the fast-evolving landscape of private higher education.

Future Research Directions

Longitudinal Study on ODI Effectiveness: Building on the proposed interventions (e.g., cultural workshops, visioning retreats), future research should track their impact over 3–5 years, measuring metrics such as staff retention rates, cross-department collaboration efficiency (via network analysis), and learning resource utilization. This would reveal whether short-term gains in psychological safety or knowledge-sharing translate into sustained cultural change, particularly in resource-constrained private universities where staff turnover and shifting priorities may dilute ODI outcomes. Mixed-method data collection—annual surveys, focus groups, and institutional performance records—could isolate causal relationships between interventions and organizational learning outcomes.

Comparative Study Across Chinese Universities: Expanding beyond HIU, a comparative analysis of private versus public universities in China could uncover systemic barriers unique to private institutions, such as reliance on tuition fees, regulatory pressures, or market-driven curricula. For instance, while public universities may struggle with bureaucratic inertia, private institutions like HIU face acute challenges in balancing profitability with educational quality. This research could employ Bui and Baruch's (2010) cross-sector framework to analyze how funding models, leadership styles, and policy environments shape learning organization practices, offering actionable insights for policymakers and institutional leaders navigating China's stratified higher education landscape.

AI and Adaptive Learning Systems: Investigating AI-driven tools (e.g., personalized learning platforms, chatbots for just-in-time support) could address HIU's resource gaps identified in this study. For example, AI-curated microlearning modules might mitigate time constraints for administrative staff, while predictive analytics could identify skill deficiencies before they impact performance. However, research must also explore barriers to adoption in private universities, such as limited IT budgets, data privacy concerns, or resistance to tech-centric workflows. Theoretical grounding in Marquardt's Systems Learning Model would ensure these tools align with holistic organizational learning strategies rather than operating as isolated fixes.

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