The Interrelation between Organizational Learning Culture and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Alona Eisenberg[1] MSc. sc. soc.; **Jelena Davidova**[2] Dr. paed.; **Irena Kokina**[3] Dr. psych.
Daugavpils University, Latvia
alonaeisenberg@hotmail.com[1]; jelena.davidova@du.lv[2]; irena.kokina@du.lv[3]

Abstract: In the era of rapid technological transformations and under conditions of growing competitive environment and changes in customers' needs, the survival of the organizations depends on their ability to learn how to properly and quickly increase their efficiency and performance and adapt to the changing environment. The management of changes is the first priority for the organizational leader. Leaders have to attract, motivate, and reward their workers, as well as train, educate and improve the performance of their employees by creating organizational learning culture (OCL). Organizations that have prioritized learning and development have achieved an increase in productivity and profitability. The organization, whose employees' behavior and attitude to job are demonstrated in their contribution made beyond the job's demands, beyond the level they are committed to and for what they are not recompensed by the organization, will always be able to be competitive and will succeed for years. D.W. Organ (1988) called such behavior "Organizational Citizenship Behavior" (OCB) and emphasized its being an important factor in assisting the organization to reach its goals. Research aim: to provide the theoretical background of the interrelation between organizational learning culture and organizational citizenship behavior of employees. A review of the respective literature identified a gap in the research on the concept OCB and its dimensions by the examination through learning culture characteristics. It is suggested that the organization should look for ways of improving the OCB of their workers by creative OLC motivated by the leadership.

Keywords: organizational citizenship behavior, organizational learning culture.

Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, due to the current expansion of the global economy and the rapid evolution of technology and innovation, the organizations are facing an ongoing need that the employee learns and develops (Egan, Yang, Bartlett, 2004). In this context, the organization must stay competitive in order to survive. The organization's activity in the restless, uncertain and turbulent environment, and the need to adapt to changes, require from the organizational learning subject to become one of the most important subjects in the organizational field.

In order to continue and to preserve their success in the global, competitive and dynamic world, the organizations need to improve their performance, to learn faster and better than their competitors. To this end, they need to increase their ability to change by accelerating the development of new products, processes and services (Mirkamali, Thami, Alami, 2011). The emphasis is put on prioritizing the development of an organizational learning ability that will enable the organization to survive the pursuit of product and profit. The only organizations that can survive are those that are able to transform themselves into more intelligent and profitable ones, as well as improve their learning capability. An organization that will transform itself according to this new kind of structure will gain greater knowledge, flexibility, speed, power and learning ability. This paper will refer to such kind of organization as a 'learning organization'. K.E. Watkins and V.J. Marsick (1993) have defined the learning organization as one that learns continuously and transforms itself. Organizational learning is a process of knowledge acquisition, dissemination and exploitation that is important for an organization's competitiveness and survival. Companies with a learning capability can gain a competitive advantage (Chang, Lee, 2007).

Moreover, what is expected of the employee today is undergoing changes. In order to learn a new technology and to work with it, the employees require new skills, and need to be more creative and competent. To achieve this, there is a need for the employees who can be considered to be 'caring' and investing. Such employees volunteer to fulfil their tasks beyond their defined role. Organizations whose employees have human behavior which is expressed in the employee's contribution beyond the job's demands, beyond the level he/she is committed to. D.W. Organ (1988) called this behavior "Organizational Citizenship Behavior" (OCB) and emphasized it as an important factor in assisting the organization to reach its goals. One of the organization's main goals is to find the right way to make the

employee behave accordingly. The organization leaders have to attract, to motivate, to reward, to recognize and retain, to train, to educate, and to improve the performance of those employees. The leaders must satisfy the changing needs and expectations of the workers, thereby leading to the evolution of the learning organization (Singh, 2008).

The main aim of the research is to investigate the relationship between organizational learning culture (OLC) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The purpose of this paper is to provide the theoretical background of the interrelation between organizational learning culture (OLC) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) of employees.

Methodology

The research undertaken for this article is theoretical and based on a study and synthesis of the existing literature on the topic. The scope of the literature consulted includes classic management literature and articles specifically on organizational learning culture and organizational citizenship behavior of employees. Analysis of the respective literature identified a gap in the research on the concept OCB and its dimensions by the examination through learning culture characteristics. It is suggested that the organization should look for ways of improving the OCB of their workers by generating an OLC motivated by the leadership.

The learning organizational indices OCB can be used by the manager as evaluation tools to determine employee's levels of performance and thereby improve the range of tools that are available to managers. This may help to recognize the parameters of the environment that managers work in, the degree of success of the organization in fulfilling its objectives and especially the employees' attitude towards the organizational apparatus. These indices help to identify an organization whose employees expresses willingness to maintain an OCB beyond the requirement in the formal role framework.

Results and Discussion

Organizational learning and learning organization

Since the second half of the 20th century, the continuous changes cause an increase in ambiguity and uncertainty. Under these conditions, where the speed and power of changes are incalculable, the organization's ability to learn is critical (Pedler, Boydell, Burgoyne, 1989). According to R.W. Revans (1980), the learning rate in organizations must be equal to or bigger than the change rate in the environment.

C. Argyris (1997) defines organizational learning as a process of errors exposure and correction. D. Robbey and C.A. Sales (1994) associates learning with a storage process of acquisition, accessibility and control of organizational memory. The above definition indicates that organizational learning occurs through different types of processes:
- the process of disclosure and error correction;
- the process of knowledge development and accumulation;
- the process of acquiring knowledge and storing it in an available organizational memory;
- the process of expanding the capacity to take effective action.

In the first years of research in this field, scientists stayed at the individual level and described the process as a result of all individuals in the organization working together to learn, to solve problems and to create innovative solutions. Later researches showed that organizational learning occurs at all levels, such as individual, team, organization and community (Beckman, Berry, 2007; Garvin, Edmondson, Gino, 2008; Yen-Hsu, 2009). Organizational learning is used to describe certain types of activities that take place in an organization. According to A. Ahmadi (Ahmadi, Daryani, Bevrani, 2014), organizational learning is a construct, which implies that the entity called an organization actually gets engaged in the process of gathering and processing information, and as a consequence its potential behavior is changed.

The organizational learning process is dependent upon a workplace culture that encourages staff members, at all levels of the organization, to share ideas and insights (Castiglion, 2006).

Unlike the definition of 'organizational learning' that focuses on understanding the nature and the processes, the definition of the term 'learning organization' refers to the practical and ongoing aspects of the ability and the application of practices that help the organization to learn, such as: experiencing

and learning from the experiences, problem-solving ability, self-observation, drawing conclusions, creation and invention, knowledge acquisition and transformation. According to D.A. Garvin (1993), the learning organization is an organization with the ability to create, acquire and transfer knowledge; an organization that is capable to adapt its behavior in a way that will reflect the new knowledge and insight gained and accumulated. E.W. Rowden (2001) defines the learning organization as a model of strategic change where everyone is a partner in identifying and solving problems, so that the organization is continuously variable through experimentation and improvement, and thereby increasing the capacity for growth and achieving its goals. Learning organizations have significant experience in processes and the ability to analyze, implement and integrate this experience. D.A. Garvin (Garvin, Edmondson, Gino, 2008) believe that all the organizations must become learning organizations and that this is necessary today more than ever, since all the organizations need to deal with the changing environment and external forces. They stress that the learning organizations should be able to change their behavior according to knowledge and new discoveries. It means that learning organizations can succeed at the processes of analyzing, implementation and the integration of their experience.

K.E. Watkins and V.J. Marsick (1993) define a learning organization as one that learns continuously and transforms itself. S.L. Beckman and M. Berry (2007) believe that in learning organizations continuous learning is common knowledge. According to R.L. Daft (1999), the learning organization is an organization where everyone is involved in identifying and solving problems; this procedure allows the organization to go through an ongoing experience, improve and increase its ability.

A. Ahmadi (Ahmadi, Daryani, Bevrani, 2014) describe a learning organization as a construct related to an organization that has a thoughtful philosophy for anticipating, reacting, and responding to change, complexity, and uncertainty. The learning organization refers to a particular type of organization: it is an organization that is good at organizational learning.

The importance of learning for the organization's success, development and survival yielded an extensive professional literature in the last three decades. However, many researchers claim that there is no accepted theory or model about the organizational learning (Garvin, 1993; Crossan et al., 1999; Tsang, Zahra, 2008; Kurland, Peretz, Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2010; Swart, Harcup, 2013).

Some researches see in organizational learning and in learning organization two sides of the same coin and use the concept interchangeably (Robey, Boudreau, Rose, 2000; Moilanen, 2005; Song, Kim, Kolb, 2009) while others believe that the concepts are different (Sun, 2003; Yeo, 2005). Organizational learning refers to a process of acquiring, disseminating and using knowledge, while a learning organization refers to a structure that exists because of learning, so that a learning organization would be an ideal condition to achieve. Organizational learning is academic in nature, while the learning organization literature targets at practitioners and consultants (Sampe, 2012).

Table 1

Organizational Learning and Learning Organization
(Kontoghiorghes, Awbery, Feurig, 2005)

Organizational Learning	A Learning Organization
Organizational learning is considered to be a learning process.	A learning organization is regarded as a form of organization.
Occurs naturally in organizations.	Needs to be developed.
Literature on organizational learning appeared from descriptive and academic inquiries.	Literature on the learning organization was developed mainly from prescriptive and practical demands
Focuses on the individual learner, and knowledge residing in the individual.	Learners perform at the individual, group, and organizational levels, and knowledge is located not only in individuals, but also in the organization's memory of the particular learning organization.

Table 1 shows some differences between organizational learning and learning organization. This research focuses on an organizational learning concept.

Organizational learning culture

According to C. Argyris and D. Schon (1978), organizations are not just a collection of individuals. M. Popper and R. Lipshitz (2000) suggested that the organization has the opportunity to learn in two ways: by learning from its own members or by bringing experts from outside the organization. They distinguish between the two terms: 'learning in organization' (LIO) and 'learning by organization' (LBO). Learning in organization means that an organizational learning process is mediated by different individuals from the organization and learning by organizations implies a situation in which the organization itself is the learning agent.

Organizations learn through the experiences and activities of individual members of the organization. Organizational learning will not occur without dedicating time and creating structures and mechanisms that allow the existence of learning processes that are assimilated in the organization's routine (Engleharrdt, Simmons, 2002). These structures include: a) frequent meetings for solving problems, b) flexible time for meetings, c) regular activities for professional development, d) shared preparation period, e) cross-department team meetings. Learning organizations are organizations that embed learning mechanisms established within their learning culture (Popper, Lipshitz, 2000). Y. Jung and N. Takeuchi (2010) claimed that the organizational culture provides rules, norms and values for organizational members sharing information, reaching agreements and acting on its results. A learning culture is an integral part of organizational behavior that occurs as a continuous process of improvement. An organizational learning culture is focused on basic assumptions, beliefs, values and behaviors that are associated with learning organizations (Schein, 2010). The characteristics of organizational learning culture are a) fast response, b) flexibility, c) integration, d) entrepreneurship and e) innovation.

V.J. Marsick and K.E. Watkins (2003) developed the dimensional questionnaire (DLOQ) that is designed to measure learning culture in organizations. This questionnaire has seven dimensions of the learning organization culture: a) continuous learning, b) inquiry and dialogue, c) collaboration and team learning, d) creating systems to capture and share learning, e) empowering people toward a collective vision, f) connecting the organization to its environment, g) strategic leadership (Table 2).

Table 2

Value of an Organizational Learning Culture
(adapted from Marsick, Watkins, 2003)

Dimension	Definition
Continuous learning	Learning is designed into work so that people can learn on the job.
Inquiry and dialogue	The culture is changed to support questioning, feedback and experimentation.
Collaboration and team learning	Groups are expected to learn together and work together; collaboration is valued by the culture and rewarded.
Creating systems to capture and share learning	Both high- and low-technology systems to share learning are created and integrated with work; access is provided; systems are maintained.
Empowering people toward a collective vision	Responsibility is distributed closely to decision making so that people are motivated to learn what they are held accountable for.
Connecting the organization to its environment	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.
Strategic leadership	Leaders model, champion, and support learning.

Theory of V.J. Marsick and K.E. Watkins (2003) explains how people shape culture for learning. They propose a learning process at two levels: learning at the individual level and learning at the organizational level. V.J. Marsick and K.E. Watkins (2003) emphasize that individual learning is related to organizational learning though not equal to it. They support the idea that organizational culture is built by leaders and other key people, who learn from their experience, influence the learning of others, and create an environment of expectations.

Organizational learning culture has found wide expression in the studies in recent decades, examining its effect on job's satisfaction, turnover intention, organizational commitment, organizational performance, organizational learning process, organization leader's impact (Egan, Yang, Bartlett, 2004; Joo, Lim, 2009; Song, Joo, Chermack, 2009; Hung et al., 2010; Joo, Park, 2010; Song, Jeung, Cho, 2011; Emami et al., 2012). The theoretical framework of V.J. Marsick and K.E. Watkins (2003) is the basis of the study at hand.

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB)

The term 'organizational citizenship behavior' (OCB) was first defined by C.A. Smith, D.W. Organ and J.P. Near (1983). They describe the behaviors that are different from in-role behaviors and go beyond the role prescriptions to contribute to organizational functioning. According to D.W. Organ (1988), OCB reflects "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that is the aggregate which promotes the effective functioning of the organization" D.W. Organ (Organ, 1988, 4) thinks that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable. OCB is not written in any job's definition and results occur from people's own personal extra effort (Kaya, 2015).

T.S. Bateman and D.W. Organ (1983) classified OCB as helping voluntarily other employees, providing innovative suggestions to improve the organization, not taking advantage of employees' rights, not requesting unnecessary leaves, participating in the elective meetings and avoiding complaints. J.C. Jackson (2009) described OCB as beneficial behavior of workers, which was not prescribed but occurred freely to help others achieve the task at hand.

Organizational citizenship behavior has five dimensions:
- altruism comprises all voluntary behavior, specifically aimed at helping others in an organizationally relevant issue or in relation to problems in the organization (Kamer, 2001);
- conscientiousness is the behavior that reflects the genuine acceptance and adherence of workplace rules, regulations, and procedures in a manner above what is expected (Podsakoff et al., 2000);
- sportsmanship is defined as "a willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining." (Organ, 1990, p. 96);
- courtesy comprises behavior that includes informing other employees before the decisions that may affect them (Deluga, 1995);
- civic Virtue is characterized by behaviors that indicate an employee's deep concerns and active interest in the life of the organization (Law, Wong, Chen, 2005).

Where OCB can be found? In which behavior is the concept expressed? Here are some examples of behavior that reflect the behavior of the OCB:
- helping others when they return from a long absence;
- sharing information with other employees;
- announcing in advance when the worker can't get to work;
- not taking breaks outside those that are officially defined;
- not doing personal phone calls from the work;
- not looking forward to the end of the work;
- using the organization's resources in a prudent and economical way even when it is not enforced by the management;
- contributing to improving the organization's image and reputation in the external environment;
- assisting the superiors even when they don't ask to do so and without expecting anything in return.

Because of the changing environment, organizations will necessarily become more dependent on individuals who are willing to contribute to successful change, regardless of formal job requirements (Somech, Drach-Zahavy, 2004). OCB expressed in different levels of identification with the organization, its goals and values. It gives the organization strength, motivation and resources and promotes the organization's interests. OCB specifies activities that are not considered as organizational qualifications, but as the activities, which are useful for organizations.

Recent researchers focused on the practical importance of the OCB. According to D.W. Organ (Organ, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, 2005), OCB contributes to innovation, resource transformation and adaptability in environments demanding complex, team oriented and ambiguous work, which ultimately improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire organization. According to I. Oplatka (2004, 2009), the employee's work life includes many activities and tasks that are beyond the formal definition of the employee's role, are given to his/her consideration and his/her desire, and very much contribute to the organization's functioning and its success. OCB develops the effective performance of organization, elevates the organization as a whole and recommends it to other parties (Williams, Anderson, 1991).

Since the establishment of the OCB concepts, numerous studies had been conducted, which examined the connection between organizational citizenship behavior and other organizational phenomena, such as job satisfaction (Williams, Anderson, 1991; Talachi, Gorji, Boerhannoeddin, 2014), personal commitment (Tepper et al., 2004), turnover intention (Egan, Yang, Bartlett, 2004), interdependence and team's identification (Van Der Vegt, Van De Vliert, Oosterhof, 2003), professional (Cohen, Kol, 2004), organizational politics (Vigoda, 2000), organizational climate (Farooqui, 2012) and organizational support (Islam et al., 2014).

This research will use the five-category model developed by D.W. Organ (1988).

The interrelation between organizational learning culture and organizational citizenship behavior

A. Kaya (2015) suggested that OCB is closely related to organizations' learning identities and harmony and commitment among its members. When employees perceive that their organization is providing them such an environment where there are chances of growth, learning and sharing ideas, they will show their relations with the organization as well as with other colleagues. When employees feel that their colleagues and the entire organization allow them to learn, to experience, to make mistakes and to learn from the mistakes without being accused, they will be willing to invest in their work and show the kind of behavior which OCB suggests. The employee should have the knowledge, ability and opportunity to behave according to the predictions of organizational citizenship behavior (Ahmadi, Daryani, Bevrani, 2014). According to A. Somech and A. Drach-Zahavy (2004), learning organizations create the environment that enables the employee to focus on continuous learning instead of focusing on the immediate outcomes. T. Islam assume that learning values widen the perceptions of employees and they start thinking a new, instead of performing formal tasks i.e. helping their colleagues to achieve the desired outcomes of the organizations for its success (Islam et al., 2013). This means that learning values increase the citizenship among employees. S.J. Jo and B.K. Joo (2011) conclude that organizational learning culture is positively associated with OCB.

The goal of this study is to research the interrelation between organizational learning culture and organizational citizenship behavior and their values. Based on detailed literature review and determining the basic dimensions of both independent and dependent variables, Figure 1 shows the research conceptual model.

As is obvious from the conceptual model of research, basic dimensions of organizational learning culture encompass:
- creating continuous learning opportunities;
- promoting inquiry and dialogue;
- encouraging collaboration and team learning;
- creating systems to capture and share learning;
- empowering people toward a collective vision;
- connecting the organization to its environment;
- providing strategic leadership for learning.

Basic dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior also encompass: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue.

The current study attempts to enrich the term organizational citizenship behavior "OCB" by examination through organizational learning characteristics.
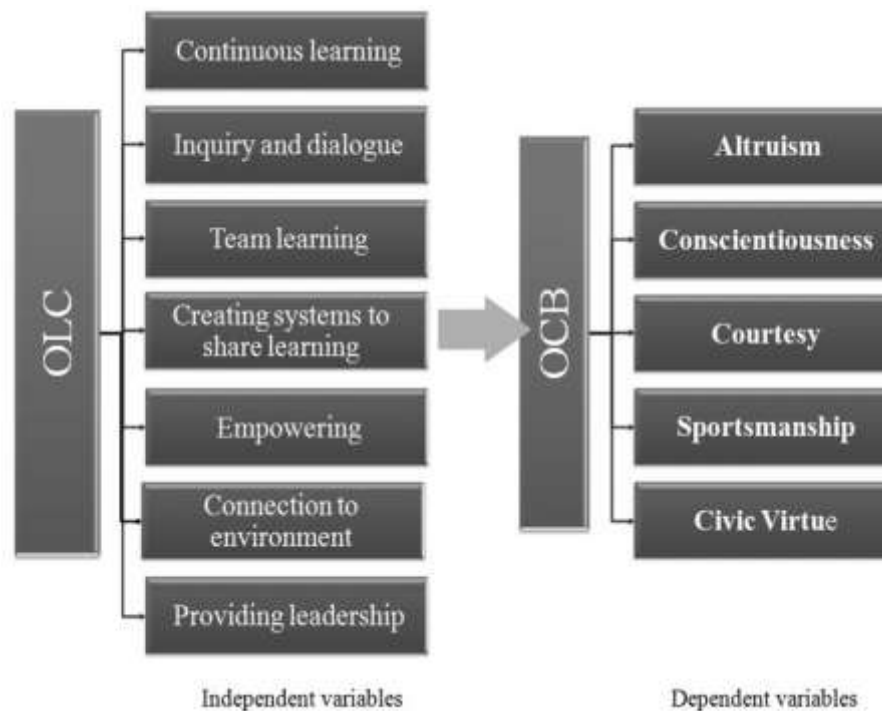
Figure 1. The research conceptual model.

The positive contribution of OLC to job satisfaction, turnover intention, organizational commitment, organizational performance, organizational learning process, organization leader's impact are things well acknowledged by the literature (Egan, Yang, Bartlett, 2004; Joo, Lim, 2009; Song, Kim, Kolb, 2009; Hung et al., 2010; Joo, Park, 2010; Song, Jeung, Cho, 2011; Emami et al., 2012). The factor that may predict the behavior as suggested by OCB is organizational learning, which has not been verified so far. Last decade researches (Somech, Drach-Zahavy, 2004; Islam et al., 2012, 2013, 2014) concluded that OLC and OCB correlate with each other and OLC is a strongly significant moderator of OCB. A learning organization provides such culture to its employees where they can learn continuously and share their ideas and dialogues with each other. This research has added to the understanding of the interrelation between OLC and OCB by finding correlation between their dimensions. In addition to the theoretical implications of this study, there are also practical ones. Leaders and managers of the organization are recommended to increase the employees' OCB through the strategies such as promoting their knowledge via giving training courses, preparing necessary facilities to continue their education and also improving their interpersonal and work relationships to create a learning organization.

Conclusions

The present research has only offered the conceptual model of the interrelation between OLC and OCB but did not check it empirically. Future research will survey different dimensions of OLC and OCB. Cultural context may affect the forms of citizenship behavior observed in organizations. It gives the new direction of further research: to check and compare if there are differences in the results in various countries, in profit and non-profit organizations.

The future studies will be contributed both theoretically and practically. One of the theoretical implications: OLC will be validated and measured by OCB correlation. Further studies will explore in depth how learning culture in the organizations encourage Organizational Citizenship Behavior. It has become important for managers today to have employees with some extraordinary qualifications because of the fierce competition. By promoting learning culture managers should enhance employee's extra role behaviors.

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