WORKPLACE LEARNING OF EMPLOYEES & HINDRANCES; NEED OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Workplace learning plays a key role in developing individuals & teams and it is highly supporting to the efficient organizational functions for sustainability. The learning occurs in every individual while he faces various workplace situational changes and challenges. It may shape him to become expert in his field. At the same time there are many obstacles the employees face while work in various work situations. This paper has the objectives to explore and discuss the workplace learning of employees, challenges of employees in learning and to establish the need of learning organization strategic approach for employee workplace learning and development. The qualitative study adopted the literature survey method for collecting the existing literatures using terms, related to workplace learning, organization learning and employee learning. It adopted the qualitative approach using content analysis summative method to report and discusses the workplace learning and hindrances in employee learning and need of organizational learning approach. The study listed the hindrances of workplace learning like lack of motivation, lack of provision of facilities, resistance to change, no revision of monetary benefits, lack of assessment and feedback, lack of sufficient training and support, lack of career growth and poor work culture fostering negativity, discrimination and inequality. This paper emphasized the organizational learning approach to eliminate the hindrances and obstacles in employee learning since the organization learning covers the learning and improvement across all the functional levels and this approach mainly focuses on individual learning and development.

KEYWORDS: Workplace learning, Development of employees, Learning Organization, Individual effort,

1. Workplace Learning

Workplace learning is a process of acquiring work related knowledge, becoming skilled through application of knowledge in various work situations and in work environment, setting work attitude

through gaining work experience. Workplace learning is the way in which skills are upgraded and knowledge is acquired at the place of work (Cacciattolo (2015). Collin et al (2011) discusses that the learning in the workplace is an ever-present practice that occurs through customary work systems and its functions. Further workplace learning mostly happens among employees through work-related interactions and communication, and it contributes to both employees as individual and organization as a whole. This process of acquisition of knowledge and skills occurs by formal and informal means at the workplace (Manuti et al., 2015; Rintala et al., 2018). Most of the times, the workplace learning occurs informally. The informal workplace learning includes work related learning that is mostly in the form of self directed learning, networking, coaching and mentoring (Yeo, 2008). The informal way of learning is often incorporated into workplace social interactions and customized work systems (Cacciattolo (2015). Workplace learning addresses the two way representation of learning and development from employers and employees perspectives for the contribution to the social interactions and development (Cacciattolo (2015). There are various types of workplace learning occur in the workplace.

Workplace Planned Learning - This is quite happening among employees through having certain planned work activities like training programs, courses, specific sessions and so on. This may include information sharing and communication process that enhances to efficient learning among employees (Silverman, 2003).

Experience based learning - Eraut (2000) states that the experience based learning in workplace occurs in an unplanned way and unaware manner. This is quite happening the employees get into practice and undergo challenges and march towards tasks completion and target achievements. This is an on the job learning activity may happen in workplace and nearby Silverman (2003). This type of learning may mostly occur through mentoring and coaching and instruction methods. This type of learning may enhance the employees to learn though job rotation, and having increased autonomy. Bishop et al (2006) discussed the importance of increased autonomy for employees to experience the learning while taking steps to face work challenges, tasks completion and target achievements. It is often argued that mentoring provides opportunities for peers to help novices become experts (Yeo, 2008).

Continuous learning - This is quite happening in doing the certain processes. The continuous learning includes a group of employees working together either formally or informally for the work achievement, work routines and so on. The learning happens where the work environment is all the time focused on the learning of new skills and knowledge and largely free of political conflict. In this scenario employees are continuously encouraged and provided with resources to learn for themselves from e.g. books, manuals, videos and computer-based learning (Fuller & Unwin, 2003).

Unconscious learning - The workplace learning often predominantly occurs unconsciously, unintentionally (Doornbos et al, 2008) and (Mallon et al, 2005). This is purely situated, created and informal happens in social process. Yeo (2008) argues that the informal learning of employees happening without the encouragement of organization. Doornbos et al (2008) further argue that the employees learn implicitly and are able to distinguish the changes later state of their experience. The changes may have happened in employees' thoughts, and behaviors.

Situated learning - The workplace learning may frequently occur in created work systems and work culture that includes work situations and practices. The employee groups undergo learning in a situated customized work practice and activities. The theory and model of Lave & Wenger (1991) emphasizes 'Communities of Practice' and 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation' concepts, communities of practice refers to the created situated customized work practice and activities in workplace, and legitimate participation refers to the active participation of employees in the created situated practice in the workplace. It makes them feel of belongingness (Fuller et al, 2005), Avis, 2010); Clarke, 2005). The situated workplace learning may lead to some sort of uniformity or diversity in their structure and may lead to either organized or voluntary learning (Chang et al 2009).

Learning's Role in the modern workplace - In modern workplace, the traditional view on learning as a human resource function that has been changed into the workplace learning to individual development, social interactions and social well being and knowing the self potential through the organized work activities and functions. Harmon (2015) identifies Learning & Growth measures the survival of the firm, sustainable functioning and so on. There is an expansion of learning into every part of a firm is a natural extension of the need for all functional areas in a firm to continually grow and improve service to the increasingly complex and competitive external environment in which all industries are working today. In modern workplace the learning activities can encompass a number of different areas like technical learning involves developing new skills for new tools, whether those skills are applied to a new software application, new manufacturing equipment, or some other technical aspect of the business.

2. Objectives and methodology

This paper has the objectives to explore and discuss the workplace learning of employees, challenges of employees in learning and to establish the need of learning organization strategic approach for employee workplace learning and development. The qualitative study adopted the literature survey method for collecting the existing literatures using terms related to workplace learning, organization learning, employee learning and individual involvement. It adopted the qualitative approach using content analysis summative method to report and discusses the workplace learning and hindrances in

employee learning and need of organizational learning approach.

3. Learning of employees
a) Individual participation
Learning is an individual activity and individual experience giving learned experience to others. Learning requires the individuals to participate in the learning activities. Workplace and work system creates scope for work related education and exposure through individual participation (Billett, S, 2004). The employee participation in creating, executing, and collaborating, integrating work related activities that may give them a vast exposure and satisfaction. Kyndt & Baert (2013) explains the importance of individual efforts for work related education that may enable individual participation in learning by involvement in work functions.

b) Following a work culture and system
Learning occurs among employees while they involve themselves in work activities and functions in an already set work culture. The work system encompasses the process, procedures, and technologies for work accomplishments. The work culture refers to the value, beliefs, concepts, principles of the organizations that may provide scope for employee learning and development. When employees get into a work system and culture, they participate, (Kyndt & Baert, 2013) and they undergo changes by learning new things through facing work situations including technical advancements, usage of machines, tools and equipments, work process improvements, meeting of customers. Therefore the employees learn many through following a work system, procedures, rules and regulations of the workplace.

c) Teamwork and relationship
The employees learn many things while they are working in teams. The employees learn the collaborative working practice, they are able to share the learning experience, they learn how to work together for common purpose (Billett, S. 2001), they learn to analyze the collective knowledge on work process and progress and they learn to adapt the strategies to achieve a common goal. The learning process the employee undergoes that promotes individual and team growth from diverse perspectives. Further they are able to learn the problem-solving, communication ways, and critical thinking skills as well. The learning in team work gives the employees exposure to knowledge sharing, personal growth, improved decision-making, enhanced problem-solving, stronger team cohesion, increased productivity and efficiency, and higher job satisfaction and morale.

d) Sailing in difficult and complex situations
The workplace will lead the employees to the toughest situations in work environment notably the changes happening and adoption to the changing environment. Notably the changes like process

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changes, technological changes and structural changes. The difficulties in workplace will create platform for employees to utilize their fullest skills and potentials. They wish to prove their skills. They will apply what they learned previously in workplace. Finally, the difficulties and challenges in workplace make the employees to survive in difficulties and discover their skills and potential and it support them to realize their potentiality in complex situations.

e) Completion of tasks and targets

Every employee and worker have to take many steps to complete the given tasks and fixed targets. For which they learn work step by step process and work procedures. They use their knowledge and apply skills; if they are not familiar then they have to learn. The recent day modern and technological era pushes and pulls the employees to learn certain skills to complete the tasks and targets with the support of technology. By this way of completion of tasks and target, they learn how to follow quality standard in process, time following, tasks selection, the way of doing the work activities, accessing the sources to complete the tasks and target achievement.

f) Learning the changes and managing the changes

Workplace is meant for creating and undergoing changes day by day in the form of work process, human interactions, relationship, tasks completion, meeting customers, following work system and culture. In this changing workplace, the employees have to survive and sustain, they require unique kind of skills and quality like being patient, observation, readiness, and responding to the situations. Through observations and discussions, they learn the changes happening in the workplace through which they are ready for managing the changes by learning the new things notably the technology advancements, process improvement, system changes and so on.

g) Shaping into a work culture and adoption

The workplace has to create a culture and a work system to make employees to shape themselves for adopting changes in workplace. There are many factors would create resistance to change like capability of employees, no interest, fear of change, work overload and family burden. The workers make attempts to get into the changes and adopt. By those situations, they learn to be active, persistent, to be engaged and to be committed. The work place changing culture and system creates huge scope for employees to learn for their development and sustainment.

4. Hindrances in Learning of employees
a) Lack of motivation

Motivation in workplace in the form of benefits, provision of facilities, and recognition of employees, employee participation, assessments, and supportive training programs is hugely impact the employee learning in the workplace. If not, the employees are discouraged and disengaged in learning

voluntarily. This would create imbalance, mismatch in work schedule, no poor work culture and a system and so on.

b) Resistance to learn and change

This is quite happening among the employees to be with resistance to change. This is happening due to many workplace reasons and factors. First of all, they are not ready to change their work behavior to the work standard and work process; next, there may not be motivational factors like monetary benefits, explanation of work activities, no proper coaching of work functions.

c) Lack of facilities & benefits

Provision of facilities and benefits are prime factors determining the learning attitude and tendency among the employees and workers. This may hugely impact directly and indirectly. The facilities and benefits are the supportive motivational factors. The facilities are like proper work stations, computer enabled work stations, work stations with communication network, proper chairs, tables, the required stationary items, tools and equipments, network connections, accessing social media platforms, canteen, rest rooms, first aid centers, parking and so on. The benefits are accessing educational loans for children, insurance plans, paid holidays, coupons and gifts and so on. These would greatly impact the learning behavior of employees in workplace. If not provided, the consequence may be disengagement from work, strike and so on.

d) No update in provision of monetary benefits responding to the industry standard

Every worker and employee come for work to earn money for survival and for economic growth. Timely update in provision of monetary benefits hugely impacts the learning attitude of employees and retention tendency of employees. If no improvement in monetary benefits, there are the employees inactive in work learning and experience. They may disengage; they may show their frustration in the workplace.

e) Lack of Assessment and Feedback

Any type of work activity, function, work roles and responsibilities, there is a need for assessment that will direct the employees to learn the lacking areas and encourage them for learning new things and survival. Assessments in workplace like appraisals, opinion surveys, assessment centers, self-assessments may show the employees the right direction of work carry out. Feedback after assessment may lead the employees to learn how to carry out the roles and responsibilities. If there is no assessments and feedback mechanism in the workplace, can't be expected the learning efficiency among the employees.

f) Work system not encouraging the employee participation

There are many employees active in work roles and responsibilities. They want to learn more about work standard, bench marking process, and work life standard. There is need for a work system to encourage the employee participation in work role selection, work allotment, responsibility settings, target and tasks allocation, assessments. Apart from that employees are to be participated in employee decisions for their career development. If not, a work system doesn't encourage participation the employees will lose the learning attitude that results disengagement among employees.

g) Partiality, injustice, gender discrimination

The workplace is with a culture of injustice, showing partiality among employees, having gender discrimination, inequalities that may result among the employees the inactiveness in learning, social disorder, disengagement, power abuse and so on. This may impact the morale of employees. The learning occurs in workplace among employees because of the work culture and system to maintain justice, equality, acceptance and recognition.

h) Lack of training and learning opportunities

There are many organizations and companies not supporting to training program arrangements, trainings schedules. This is all because of the lack of support from the top level management. This may result poor learning of employees (Rintala et al., 2018). They may not know the very basic activities and functions of the particular department. Lack of trainings and learning may lead to poor efficiency, no direction of work, no goal settings and no achievements.

i) Lack of career growth

Each and every employee or worker is willing to grow in their workplace economically, socially, politically. There is a need of such work system and culture focusing to career growth of employees across the levels of various job roles and responsibilities. If not, they may not be active in learning, they may be frustrated, this results the disengagement, decreasing retention tendency among employees, negativity spread, low morale among workers and so on.

5. Organizational Learning

Organizational learning is a continuous process where organization as a whole take steps to acquire functional, technological and process knowledge and to gain experience. The steps and efforts across the functional levels are leading to improvement and adaptation. It involves individual efforts, team coordination, and overall organization efforts for its effectiveness by encouraging innovative work culture and a system. The organization learning process fosters integration, interconnectedness, innovation and supportive work culture for productivity and sustainability.

Organization as one of the beneficiaries of workplace learning, it should foster creating such a work environment and positive work climate motivating employees across all the levels for innovative, skilled, experienced, adoptive, coordinative and sustainable (Govaerts, et al., 2010). Kyndt, Govaerts, et al. (2012) identified five job characteristics that may motivate employee for learning that are the degree of autonomy in job roles, the content of job roles and the complexity in work roles and responsibilities, the learning potential of employees, having the task varieties, and the mobility opportunities. The job designs responding to the modern work culture and system that may foster learning among employees when they undergo job rotation, promotion, transfer, project take up and task completion and achievements.

6. Need of organization learning approach for employee learning and development

To the need of organizational learning, it is to be encouraged among the employees to be creative, adoptive, participative, supportive and cooperative in workplace. This is quite required the individual learning improvement across the various levels of functions of any organization. When an individual learns and improves himself that shows the development of an organization. The organizational learning depends on every individual learning that may enable to positive performance and positive growth (Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2013). While the employees are involved and motivated in workplace learning they face many challenges. The challenges must be met and overcome by the organization learning approach. The challenges are lack of motivation, resistance to change, insufficient monetary benefits, lack of assessment and feedback, lack of sufficient training and support, lack of career growth and poor work culture. These challenges can be overcome by organization learning approach.

The Organization Learning (OL) approach primarily begins from the design of job and job roles which may foster involvement and engagement of employees in work activities, work tasks and achievements.
a) The job design may promote and encourage the employees for learning new knowledge, getting update and having survival experience in the workplace (Rintala et al., 2018), job designs may be based on the capabilities and ability level of every individual to carry out the designed job responsibilities, then,
b) OL depends on work environment that foster the provision of sufficient number of facilities, tools and equipment's update as a supportive motivational factor for employee learning (Eurofound, 2015) then,
c) OL work environment fostering a culture of trustworthy, relationship building (Eurofound and Cedefop, 2020), work values, belief system, open communication, collaboration and achievement focus that may directly and indirectly motivates the employees to stay in the cultured workplace, then,
d) OL work environment encouraging employee participation in all the integrated and interconnected

work activities through team arrangement and team work activities – diverse work team, cross functional collaboration, celebration of team achievements, project-based team learning, workshops, case study analysis.

e) OL mainly fosters the provision of trainings, exclusive sessions, case study discussions (Bosch et al., 2017). The training programs may be framed based on the training needs analysis and the learning and development of employees in the workplace.

f) Further, the work environment should create positive work climate (Govaerts, et al., 2010) fostering justice, equality, procedural justice, moral values, ethics that are motivational factors for employee learning.

g) Finally, the need and prime factor of organizational learning is the proper assessment and feedback mechanisms like surveys, interviews, observations, sharing of feedback, timely provision of feedback for improvement.

7. CONCLUSION

This systematic approach to workplace learning, from the first steps of matching the learning work environment – supportive mechanisms like trainings, coaching, mentoring, models, sessions, to learner motivations –provision of monetary benefits, incentives, achievement recognition, employee participation and establishing a learning culture by creating a work routine, procedure follow – up, belief and value system on the sustainability of organizations. This approach of creating learning work environment, learner motivation, learning work culture that may lead and enable to learning integration across the level of employees and across the management and organization functions. Though many factors affect the learning of employees, the self interest, self motivation and self achievement will greatly influence the learning of employees in workplace.

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