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STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF ADULT LEARNING IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT¹

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Abstract

Although the literature in the strategic management in education and learning, and strategic human resource development have flourished in last few decades, while overall strategies of learning of employees and learning strategies for improvement of the quality of organizational performance represent substantial stream of research, absence of the critical reviews of the strategies aimed to improve the quality of adult learning in an organizational context is evident. Insight into the relevant literature showed that learning strategies are transmitters of knowledge and important stimulant for transformation of the organization. This review classified a few distinctive perspectives (individual, organizational, supportive and holistic) among authors who wrote about strategies of learning of employees, and critically compare these perspectives, having in focus their potential to improve quality of adult learning in an organizational context.

Keywords: adult learning, human resource development, learning strategies, quality of learning in an organizational context, strategies to improve quality of the learning of employees

Introduction

For contemporary organizations, strategic management is a dominant dynamic orientation for its future development, that include human resource development as a strategic link to all other relevant elements (organizational processes, structure, performance, management, culture, etc.). Strategic orientation

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of employees' learning and development through growth and combination of different elements of knowledge enables optimal organizational performance and development of the critical capacities of the organization to cope with changes. There are many scholars (Brandi, Iannone, 2017; Conti, 2009; Davis, 2014; Garavan et al., 2016; Gilley et al., 2002; McCarthy and Garavan, 2006) who recognized the importance of strategic human resource development as the constitutive element of the process of shaping, protecting, and maintaining organizational competitive advantage. These processes are enabled through learning and development of valuable, rare, not easily imitable, in work engaged, and committed employees.

Strategic orientation of organization has an important effect on the implementation of the concepts of knowledge management and the learning organization. Shifting in research perception of organization from traditional system theory toward chaos and complexity theories of systems induced by accelerated changes in a modern, dynamic world are related to the organizational requirements to move from economy of scale to economy of scope, from busy employees to optimal performers, from procedural to knowledge and system tasks, from teams to flexible, even virtual networks. Therefore, the old paradigm of human resource development practice as a domain for realization of prescribed training processes, or for learning information and developing skills "just-in-case" that employees need them in the future require new strategies to improve quality of adult learning in an organizational context, that are performed "just-in-time" and based on actual, determinates learning needs.

Learning as an Integral Part of Organizational Strategy

In organizations without a clear mission and vision human resource development activities are reduced to development of procedural, conceptual or dispositional capacities (i.e. to development of capacities to accomplish work, to understand requests or information, and/or to share mutual organizational values and interests) through unplanned, fragmented and incidental sociocultural and cognitive processes that are usually result of engagement in work activities, observing and listening colleagues/peers, or presence of employees at the workplace (Billett, 2014). But in contrast, in organizations with clear strategic orientation, human resource development activities are considered as an essential part of the processes of change. Accordingly, Boonstra emphasized the application of theoretical (andragogical/human resource development) knowledge "to the planned development and reinforcement of organizational strategies, structures, and processes for improving an organization's effectiveness" (Boonstra, 2004: 72).

Importance of the learning and application of andragogical knowledge in the context of the organization is also indicated by Laitinen (2015). He claims

that “the lower the predictability of organizational activities and the greater the uncertainty about everything continuing unchanged, the more important it becomes to enhance continuous learning, i.e. lifelong learning” as a form of adaptation (Laitinen, 2015: 36).

In organizations with strategic orientation, the learning of employees is aimed at the achievement of optimal organizational performance and an adjustment to continuous internal and external changes. Correspondingly, employees need to obtain new knowledge, skill and information directed “more to adjust to changes than to react to them” whereby “learning to integrate with other members of the organization is the key activity” (Savićević, 2007: 193).

In such organizations, as many researchers found (Despotović, 2016; Jacobs & Washington, 2003, In Manuti et al., 2015; Noe, 2010; Swanson and Holton, 2001; Thorne & Pellant, 2007, In Manuti et al., 2015) learning is not only a strategic component for individual development and organizational competitiveness, or strategic component for optimal performance, but integral part of organizational strategic vision and mission, while learning strategies are means of learning that promotes the development of employees (Manuti et al., 2015).

The learning of employees consists of activities through which they could acquire, revise or relearn knowledge necessary for work performance, “that does not take place within the context of or follow from a formally organized learning program or event” and activities “in which the adult learner is involved in an interactive work situation” (Koopmans, et al, 2006: 137). Knowledge generated that way depends on how the employees understand the current situation in their organization and what they see as desirable solutions for the future of their organization (Boonstra, 2004). Poell (2014) consider learning of employees as participation in situated work activities, that includes on-the-job and off-the-job events. In the organization with strategic orientation “the new learning and development function is being identified by employees and company leaders [...] as learner-centered, agile, energized, holistic, humanistic, just-in-time, on-demand, commitment-focused, knowledge-led, organic, integrated, strategic, networked, and long-term” (Tkaczyk, 2017: 11).

Learning in the organization is derived from “creative tensions”, that, if they are cultivated by HRD professionals, can move a whole organization forward. It is aimed “to contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives of the organization, to produce changes in behavior of individuals, group or organization, to help organization to obtain higher performance, and to enrich and develop employee’s work-related potentials” (Ovesni et al, 2017: 39) through the learning activities and strategies. Three major phases of learning in the organization with strategic orientation are (1) shifting from single loop to double loop organizational learning, (2) fostering autonomous motivation of employees, and (3) development of self-directed learning capacity of employees (Ovesni, 2014).

Learning strategies in organizational context

Deeper critical insight into the literature about strategies to improve quality of the learning of employees revealed few distinctive perspectives among authors:

1. *individual perspective*, focused on learning strategies (tactics) for improvement of learning of employees and their performance,
2. *organizational perspective* focused on facilitation strategies for improvement of the quality of organizational performance and transformation into learning organization,
3. *supportive perspective* focused on tactics that could help implementation of learning strategies in organizational context, and
4. *holistic perspective* focused on strategies used by learning organization.

Individual Perspective. Learning strategies are spontaneous or learned choices, direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious patterns for processing information or requests of the learning activity. They may vary and develop in different ways. According to Weinstein and Meyer learning strategies, in general, could be defined as “thoughts and behaviors intended to influence how a person learns, thinks, and motivates himself or herself in order to carry out a learning task” (Weinstein and Meyer, 1986, In Gibson, 2000: 70). The learning strategies include learning styles, methods (memory strategies, emotional strategies, cognitive strategies, etc.), and various techniques: note-taking techniques, listening, questioning, talking, thinking, visioning or their combinations.

As stated by Gibson (2000) the most important methods associated with learning strategies in the organizational context are complex cognitive strategies that include:

- (a) *selection strategies*, that are used to focus attention and to identify relevant information,
- (b) *rehearsal strategies*, that help learners to remember information by repetition,
- (c) *organizational strategies*, that are used to link information together, and
- (d) *elaboration strategies*, that are used to make connections between new information and the learner’s existing knowledge, experience, and interests.

He considers that “the quality of learning outcomes has been associated with the selection and use of learning strategies” and of cognitive strategies (Gibson, 2000: 70). In the formal learning settings (structured, planned indoor or outdoor activities in the organization) choices of organizational and elaboration strategies are designed by andragogues, while in informal and incidental learning employees could choose them independently, consciously or unconsciously.

Knowles, Swanson, and Holton (Knowles et al., 1998; Swanson and Holton 2001) found that to every learning style correspond complementary learning strategy. Thus, simulations, case studies, field trips, real experiences, demonstrations correspond to concrete experience; discussion, small groups, buzz groups, designated observers correspond to observation and reflection; sharing content correspond to formation of abstract concepts and generalization, while laboratory experiences, on-the-job experiences, internships, practice sessions correspond to active experimentation (testing implications of new concepts in new situations). They consider learning styles catalysts for discussion between management, andragogues, and employees about the best learning strategies.

Some authors (Conti, 2009; Haemer, et al., 2017) emphasized that difference between learning strategies and learning styles is related to the stability of pattern. While learning strategies could vary with the evolvement of organization strategy, or with the selection of specific learning tasks, learning styles are stable traits. Furthermore, Haemer and associates (2017) consider that learning dispositions related to the planning of structured, formal learning activities are different than learning strategies. While learning dispositions are personal and autogenic, learning strategies are derived from organizational context, they correspond to organizational strategy, vision and mission. Learning strategies are aimed to meet the organizational requirements and they may enhance organizational performance, although as the effects they also have improvement of individual knowledge and performance. However, it seems that employees have a tendency “to have a pattern for how they initiate a learning activity. These patterns are clear, easily identifiable, meaningfully different from each other, and impact the nature of the learning” (Conti, 2009: 895). They are, as Conti (2009) claims, related to metacognition strategies, meta-motivation strategies, and memory strategies.

- *Metacognition strategies* comprise planning, monitoring, and adjusting tactics. Planning tactics (as a part of metacognition strategies) include evoking of vision and mission, designing and managing learning process. Monitoring tactics remind learners of determination, resources, previous experience, their strengths, and weaknesses. Adjusting tactics provide learners support in self-evaluation and revision of performed learning activities.
- *Meta-motivation strategies* comprise attention, reward/enjoyment, and confidence tactics. Attention tactics are related to aiming employees' attention to learning material. Reward/enjoyment tactics are related to “anticipating or recognizing the personal value of learning the specific material and having fun or satisfaction with the learning activity” (Conti, 2009: 888). Confidence tactics are related to the self-confidence of learners and to purposefulness of the learning activity.

- *Memory strategies* comprise organization, use of external aids, and memory application tactics. Organization tactics are related to structuring or processing information. The use of external aids tactics helps learners to reinforce memory by using external support. Memory application tactics are related to usage of “remembrances, mental images, or other memories to facilitate planning and carrying out learning” (Conti, 2009: 888).

Birdthistle (2006) make a distinction between formal and informal learning related strategies. Formal learning strategies could be managed by different organizational or external actors. These strategies are structured, planned, have specified curriculum, goals, criteria for evaluation, and could be realized as seminars, lectures, workshops, etc. Although popular in small companies, these strategies have limited effect in comparison to informal learning strategies, that are “combination of cognitive and behavioral learning strategies” (Haemer, et al., 2017: 501).

Whereas other authors consider informal learning strategies common in the organization, Birdthistle wrote that “informal learning strategies are rather casual and incidental” (2006: 554). She associates them to the very limited spectrum of activities (i.e. learning from experience on the job, mentoring, discussions and journal reading). However, Noe and associates (2014), among other researchers, found that that informal learning “accounts for up to 75% of learning within organizations” (Noe et al., 2014: 247) and encompass very differentiated activities (learning through self-reflection, learning from others such as peers, supervisors, and mentors, learning from non-interpersonal sources, etc.) that “enables individuals to acquire knowledge and skills on the job, providing the potential for more meaningful learning experiences than formal training and development allow” (Noe et al., 2014: 248).

Organizational Perspective. In organizations with the strategic orientation, human resource development is an integral part of organizational strategy making and organizational strategy execution. Learning of employees have an important effect on shaping, formulation and implementation of the organizational strategy, and on the achievement of desired changes. Thus, human resource development in organizations has a strategy-shaping and strategy-supporting role that is results-driven and results-aligned, that require more transformational than transactional engagement of human resource development professionals in the organization (Gilley et al., 2002).

Gilley and associates (2002) consider that one of the important roles of strategic human resource development is to help, to organize and to maintain activity-based and results-driven learning programs. In activity-based, structured, formal, and usually external programs, learning strategy is simple and focused only on the improvement of individual performance of employees that participate in activity-based programs. Therefore, the connection of such learning

strategy with organizational strategy is very limited and could partially influence only overall organizational performance, to fragmentary improve organizational competitiveness, or to minimally raise up organizational efficiency. These “relatively short-term engagements” have little strategic value, they are based on non-empirical inquiry, and aimed to fulfill immediate and short-term learning needs, especially to improve skills, knowledge, attitudes, and abilities required to enhance individual performance (Gilley et al., 2002). Though, the learning strategy in results-driven programs is aimed to help the organization to accomplish its strategic goals and objectives, to help implementation of the strategy, to manage change, and to improve organizational performance. While activity-based programs are mostly associated to only one learning strategy (improvement of individual performance of employees through formal learning activities), in the results-driven programs (activities) several core strategies are commonly used:

- *setting strategic direction* – strategy aimed to help organizational units to set long-range strategic goals and to develop tactical plans;
- *linking learning and change initiatives to business strategy* – strategy aimed to assure harmonization of learning interventions and change initiatives with organizational mission and vision;
- *enhancing managers development* – strategy aimed to help managers to develop and to maintain necessary skills and competences, mainly through activities of action learning;
- *implementing performance-management systems* – strategy aimed to improve organizational performance through learning, feedback, and motivational tactics;
- *implementing transfer of learning processes* – strategy aimed to help human resource professionals to improve learning transfer;
- *assessing organizational effectiveness* – strategy aimed to help management to determine priority of organizational needs and services;
- *facilitating and managing change* – the strategy aimed to help management to make decisions and to plan how to cope with changes.

The learning strategies in results-driven programs are perceived by management as an investment, anticipated as means for organizational performance improvement, and means for successful realization of organizational vision and mission (Gilley et al., 2002).

While roles of human resource professionals in the activity-based programs are transactional, stylized, and mainly reduced to informing about and choosing appropriate external programs, andragogical roles related to results-driven programs are very complex and transformational. These roles encompass responsibilities: to build strategic partnerships in the organization as a means of facilitating organizational change, to establish management development and to

improve communication between different levels of management through learning activities, to develop responsibility of different groups in the organization to establish an/or to improve partnership focused on organizational strategy and performance. These professionals use learning strategies to improve competitive readiness and to develop problem-solving capacities of employees. They are focused on performance outputs, quality improvement processes, improvement of the organizational structure, job design, workflow, employee attitudes, on development and improvement of performance appraisal, performance criteria, and standards, review processes, etc.

Haemer and associates (2017) found that in two different studies five learning strategies at work have been systematically found: intrinsic and extrinsic reflection, mental repetition, seeking help from others or in written materials and trial and error behaviors.

Based on broader research findings, our critical analysis showed that there is no real congruence between authors who examined learning strategies from the organizational perspective. According to Koopmans and associates (Koopmans et al, 2006), the main types of learning strategies in the organizational context are related to the process of learning itself, to the application of the new knowledge, to the obtained information, to reflection, and to evaluation/feedback. The learning strategies in organizations, identified by Koopmans and associates (2006) are:

- (1) *learning through regular job performance* – with corresponding tactics: performing an occupational task, answering a question, preparing for work-related activities;
- (2) *application of new knowledge* – with corresponding tactics: experimentation, replication, holding on to personal vision;
- (3) *information seeking* – with corresponding tactics: asking a specific question, checking information, acquiring knowledge in learning activities;
- (4) *exchange of information* – main tactics are: discussion, brainstorming, and conversation.
- (5) *thinking about work experiences* – corresponding tactics are: observation, reflection, and receiving feedback.

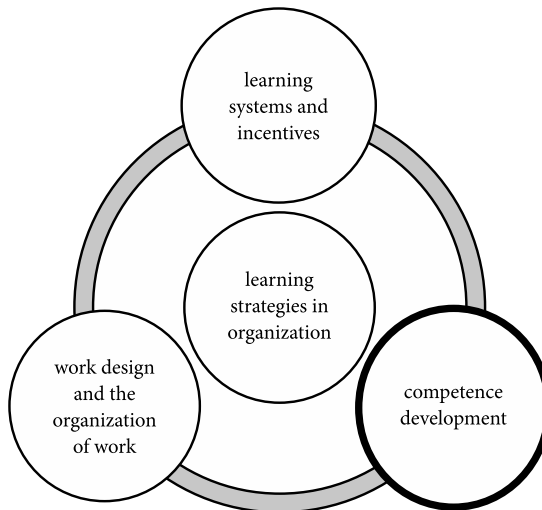
Gravenhorst and In 't Veld (Gravenhorst and In 't Veld, 2004, In Boonstra, 2004: 323) differentiated learning strategies in organization related to learning, facilitation and behavior of employees, i.e. to (1) learning and communication processes, (2) participation and involvement in the learning activities, (3) facilitation and support of the learning processes, (4) negotiation and agreement, (5) manipulation and co-optation, and to (6) explicit and implicit coercion. According to Decuyper and associates (Decuyper et al., 2010) three basic groups of the learning strategies in organizations are related to processes of information exchange, discourses and conflicts solving, i.e. to: (a) *sharing* information, knowledge, and proposals, (b) *co-construction*, that entails listening to each other and

mutually refining, building on, or modifying original narrative, and (c) *constructive conflicts* (elaborated discussions).

Sambrook (Sambrook, 2005, In McCarthy and Garavan, 2006: 246–247) proposes a holistic model of the *context* and *process* related learning strategies. *The context related learning strategies* includes learning strategies related to organization (culture, structure, management support for development, and the nature of the business itself), learning strategies related to organizational functioning (human resource management/development, staff, expertise) and learning strategies related to employees itself (responsibility for learning, motivation to learn and change, and time dedicated to learning and development). *The process of learning related strategies* includes strategies associated with the nature of the training, learning or development initiatives, and interventions such as type, practice, pace, learner control, and knowledge.

Brandi and Iannone (2015: 16) consider lifelong learning strategies in organizations as an important factor and conditional principle for the value creation and the actualization of success. These strategies contribute to creating the conditions for competitive and successful performance in organizations. Brandi and Iannone (2015) categorized human resource strategies into three main groups: strategies related to skills development activities, strategies related to learning systems and incentives, and strategies related to work design and the organization of work. They claim that “lifelong learning strategies on an enterprise level can be understood as policies, strategies and practices used in the ongoing inclusion and development of personnel in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences, to close employment and socio–economic gaps” (Brandi and Iannone, 2015: 18).

Figure 1. A conceptual model of learning strategies in organization



Source: Brandi, Iannone, 2017: 2

To answer the question about the learning strategies in the organization that can leverage and support competence development Brandi and Iannone (2017) researched learning strategies of 194 successful companies, across 53 industries. Their findings revealed three main (influential) sub-features for learning strategies development: learning systems and incentives, competence development, and work design and organization of work. In the model showed at Figure 1 *learning systems and incentive structures* are aimed at creating learning arrangements that produce and support motivation and commitment. *Work design and the organization of work* are aimed at creating strong network ties, collaborative learning opportunities and employee-led organization of work in the workplace, while *competence and/or skills development* are aimed at influencing employee competences (knowledge, skills, and experiences) formed and developed through formal and informal learning strategies.

Brandi and Iannone emphasized that learning strategies must “draw from behavioral and socio-cultural learning approaches, leveraging learning that occurs especially in the informal arenas” (2017: 4). In historical perspective, learning strategies in the organizations were dominantly oriented toward competence development, and “were mainly formal, especially encompassing pre-professional development through post-secondary studies, vocational training, education, and certification” (Brandi, Iannone, 2017: 2). However, in the contemporary organizations with strategic orientation learning include activities that are especially informal and practice-based oriented (traditional, and e-mentorship programs, on-the-job training, just-in-time learning, online network knowledge exchanges, communities of practice, by virtual reality supported programs, e-learning, etc.). Brandi and Iannone (2017) emphasized that “greater access to formal education and knowledge has also led to a perceived devaluation/commodification of knowledge and hard skills, elevating the appreciation for the ability to apply knowledge and do something with it” (Brandi, Iannone, 2017: 2).

Supportive Perspective. As main influence tactics that could help implementation of adult education and adult learning strategies in organizational context Yukl (Yukl, 2004, In Boonstra, 2004, p. 301–304) identified: rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, consultation, exchange, collaboration, apprising, coalition tactics, personal appeals, ingratiation, and pressure.

1. *Rational persuasion* – is a flexible tactic “that involves the use of explanations, logical arguments, and factual evidence to show that a request or proposal is feasible and relevant for attaining task objectives” (Yukl, 2004, In Boonstra, 2004: 301).
2. *Inspirational appeals* – that “involves an attempt to develop enthusiasm and commitment by arousing strong emotions and linking a request or proposal to a person’s values and ideals” (Yukl, 2004, In Boonstra, 2004: 302).

3. *Consultation* – is a form of empowerment that involves invitation of the target person to participate in determining how to improve a proposal or in planning how to implement a policy or change that has already been approved.
4. *Exchange* – that involves “the explicit or implicit offer to provide something the target person wants in return for carrying out a request or supporting a proposal” (Yukl, 2004, In Boonstra, 2004: 302).

The incentives for these four tactics may involve a wide range of tangible (e.g., a pay increase or promotion, scarce resources, information, assistance on another task, assistance in advancing the target’s career, etc.) or intangible benefits (e.g., prospect that the target person will feel good as a result of doing something that is noble and just, making an important contribution, performing an exceptional feat, or serving organization, a promise to return the favor in some unspecified way at a future time, etc.).

1. *Collaboration* – that involves an offer for the provision of required resources or for assistance in the case that the target person will carry out a request or approve a proposal, and the increasing benefits to be obtained by carrying out a request. While exchange involves an impersonal trade of unrelated benefits, collaboration “involves a joint effort to accomplish the same task or objective” (Yukl, 2004, In Boonstra, 2004: 303).
2. *Apprising* – that involves an explanation of benefits that the target person as an individual has because of some request or proposal.
3. *Coalition tactics* – involve support from other people (peers, subordinates, superiors, or outsiders) that influence the target person. Coalition tactics are frequently used in different combinations with other influence tactics.
4. *Personal appeals* – involves asking someone for a favor separate of affective relation or loyalty to the agent.
5. *Ingratiation* – is behavior that has as a consequence that target person feels better about the agent, that include giving compliments, doing spontaneous favors, behaving politely and respectfully, and acting cordially.
6. *Pressure* – that include “threats, warnings, and assertive behavior such as repeated demands or frequent checking to see if the person has complied with a request” (Yukl, 2004, In Boonstra, 2004: 304).

Different than previous authors, as main adult learning strategies for managing improvement of organizational performance, Levin (2004) and Davis (2014) recognized different learning activities. Thus, Levin (2004: 78) emphasized five different activities:

- (1) *search conferences* – staged joint planning conference where the outcome is concrete working plans that could initiate change. Search conferences

are builds on collective interaction and lead to participative learning processes and concrete experimentation. They are usually conducted by external facilitator over few days, bringing participants in a setting separate from the ordinary work context.

- (2) *dialogue conferences* – usually last two days and they are aimed to clarification of rules that guide the organizational process. It is outdoors activity with external facilitator, without hierarchical positions domination over the conversation;
- (3) *mutual gains bargaining* – the core process elements are to identify the conflicting situations and to shape a creative process where the participants create new actions that would potentially fulfill their interest. The outside facilitator plays an important role in helping the participants to understand the difference between interests and positions and to support the creation of alternative solutions.
- (4) *conventional meetings* – can contain one-way communication from the power-holders or it can encourage an open discussion involving all attendees. A meeting might be an approach to inform the employees of a future development, or it might take the form of stocktaking an already running change process, and
- (5) *task forces* – is a group with a clear and stated goal, i.e. the experimental activity initiated to create a more effective organization. A task force can be structured to support the participation of employees and it can be structured to lead to collective reflection.

Based on complaints obtained by survey aimed to get answers about what employees disliked about the learning activities they had, and what they would like instead of them, Davis (2014) generated list comprises of six distinctive, from andragogy standpoint very interesting strategies for learning/development of employees:

1. *Project-based learning* – purposeful, liberating learning that is embedded in the work context and develops critical business skills.
2. *Learning catalogue* – lists all skills held within the organization, with the name of the skill-holder and their cell phone number/e-mail contact; when an individual need to learn a skill, she or he could consult the catalogue and contact a colleague to see if they are available to assist; that way all employees are interconnected and becomes part of the learning culture.
3. *Ready-at-hand learning* – modules that last between 30 and 60 minutes, that are made available on the learning portal on the intranet; each module focuses on a very specific skill or knowledge area and allows employees to select exactly what they need to learn.
4. *Internal volunteering* – programs where the employees offer their skills and knowledge to another team within the organization for mutual ben-

efit; for ten days each year every employee volunteers time and service to another team where employees have the interest to learn; employees learn new skills, make new connections across the organization, and may bring back ideas that can benefit their own team or whole organization.

5. *Self-managed learning* – a goal is to engage and challenge managers to develop themselves by taking control of their own learning and to share learned with peers or their team.
6. *Active orientation* – it facilitates networking among newcomers; that activity has potential to introduce new employees to the most relevant people and organizational resources and engages newcomers with a workplace culture.

Holistic Perspective. Interconnection of learning in the organization and different aspects of the organization (organizational development, formal and informal organizational structures) is enabled by different learning strategies. In the learning organization strategy of development, the learning culture is one of the main strategic goals, derived from organizational philosophy and deeply rooted in the vision and mission of the organization and its' core strategy. The strategy of the learning organization is learning oriented, performance aimed, with increased capacity for further development. Concept of the learning organization is deeply intertwined with strategically oriented organizations and leaned on the set of different strategies: (1) strategy of learning and work combination, (2) strategy of beginning with the existing conditions, (3) strategy of learning the culture of two-way communications, (4) strategy of setting up the training ground, (5) strategy of building connections with core work, (6) strategy of building a learning community, (7) strategy of collaboration with the opponent(s), and (8) strategy of learning infrastructure development (Sengé, 1991, In Ovesni, 2014).

Watkins and Marsick (1993: 47) underlined three clusters of strategies in the learning organizations: “(1) linking formal and informal learning through better planning, (2) helping employees learn how to learn and think more complexly, and (3) supporting performance through just-in-time training and desktop learning.” As especially important for the learning organizations they underlined strategies for informal (self-directed learning, networking, coaching, mentoring) and incidental learning (learning from mistakes, internalization of meaning about actions of others).

Conclusion

The organizations with strategic orientation are driven by learning of employees. Learning is deeply embedded in every aspect of organizational performance. It affects behavior, attitudes, beliefs, norms, working patterns, formal and informal structures, organizational climate, organizational mission, and vision.

Through different learning strategies and tactics, organizations transmit memory, develop current procedures, manage dynamics between tangible and intangible organizational structures, create and re-create own future. Learning strategies differ from one to another organization due to the organizational goals, organizational context, characteristics of management, industry, systems, strategies, working patterns, policies and procedures. Their evolution and changes are driven by development and dissemination of the knowledge about adult learning. They are also driven by external changes related to domains of politics, economy, law, demography, global changes.

Albeit available and relevant literature shows the absence of deeper (both empirical and conceptual studies) about learning strategies and possibility of their improvements, it is apparent that continuous learning for continuous organizational development is the central point of the new learning paradigm, that emphasize improvement of the quality of learning of employees. Learning strategies could consist of differentiated tactics. They may be catalysts for transformation into the learning organization. Learning strategies transmit knowledge and transform the organization. At the individual level, learning strategies should help the transformation of employees into autonomous, dynamic, self-directed, self-determined persons. At the organizational level, learning strategies may lead to performance improvement, to changes in policies and procedures. At the theoretical level, future research about learning strategies should strive to establish deeper linkage with other relevant issues in human resource development (organizational commitment, work engagement, change management, virtual human resource development, etc.).

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