



**MANAGERIAL LEARNING BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION**

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**By**

**VIKINESWARAN A. MANIAM**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**February 2008**



## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my:

*Rock and Anchor*

*Santha Devi Arumugam & Suvashwinhi Vikineswaran*

respectively;

and

Mum & Dad

with innermost and everlasting affection and love.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia  
in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Chairman: Associate Professor Jegak Uli, PhD**

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The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between managerial learning and the learning organization. Previous studies have linked managerial learning to career success perception without considering the learning organization, and learning by managers to learning organization, where managerial learning variables and career success perceptions were excluded.

This research used the causal modeling research design. A validated questionnaire tested for reliability ( $\alpha=.9046$ ) via a pilot study was distributed to managers ( $n=309$ ), who formed the unit of analysis, and working in manufacturing and services based industries in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

Findings showed that although managers scored highly in expressing their perception on how well the organization they work for measure up as learning organizations, they felt that intrinsic factors such as learning behavior and subjective elements of career success contributed more to the learning of the organization as a whole rather than extrinsic

factors such as learning opportunities. The relationship of career success perception, learning behavior and learning opportunities with the learning organization showed strong, moderate and weak, with positive linear relationships respectively. Further analysis on career success perception and the learning organization showed both models as being stable and acceptable. Career success perception mediation between learning behavior and the learning organization was partial whereas that between learning opportunities and the learning organization was perfect. Finally, key fit indices indicated model a fit among the major variables involved in this research..

From the findings of this research several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, managers' two main learning behavior were: (i) planned learning, which refers to the ability of managers to take responsibility to do self-directed learning that were job relevant, and (ii) meaning oriented learning, which represents hands-on problem solving with relevant job knowledge, continuously updated via reflection and intense mental processes. However, instruction oriented learning was least preferred, because seeking instructions from top management may be misconstrued as incompetence by the management and the managers, hence negative perception shown towards seeking of top management advice when facing job related problems. Secondly, the main learning opportunity was the high responsibility and non-authority relationship that gives managers ample opportunities for on-the-job learning. Thirdly, the subjective elements of career success perception, such as the relationship with working colleagues, have strong influence on the learning organization. Finally, the confirmatory factor analysis on learning organization indicated career success perception as its strongest positive influencing variable whereas obstacles were considered as having the main negative influence. These findings would help HRD

strategists to plan for more effective managerial learning by reducing the restraining forces, such as negative perception towards instruction oriented learning and obstacles, and developing enabling ones, such as planned learning behavior, to improve the career satisfaction, and learning infrastructure. Consequently, managers can enhance their abilities to manage, direct and facilitate their own learning as well as carrying out an effective role as agents to lead other learners in the organization they work for.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PERLAKUAN PEMBELAJARAN DAN PELUANG PEMBELAJARAN  
PENGURUS DALAM ORGANISASI PEMBELAJARAN**

Oleh

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Objektif kajian adalah bagi menentukan perhubungan di antara perlakuan pembelajaran oleh pengurus dengan organisasi pembelajaran. Kajian-kajian sebelum ini mengaitkan perlakuan pembelajaran pengurus dengan persepsi kejayaan kerjaya tanpa menimbangkan organisasi pembelajaran. Kajian lain pula mengaitkan pembelajaran pengurus kepada organisasi pembelajaran di mana pembolehubah-pembolehubah pembelajaran pengurus, dan persepsi kejayaan kerjaya pula diketepikan.

Bentuk penyelidikan yang digunakan untuk kajian ini dikenali sebagai model sebab dan akibat. Soal selidik diuji untuk menentukan kebolehpercayaannya ( $\alpha=.9046$ ) sebelum diedarkan kepada pengurus-pengurus yang mewakili unit analisa ( $n=309$ ) yang bekerja di sektor pengeluaran dan perkhidmatan di sekitar Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa walaupun pengurus-pengurus mendapati bahawa tahap pembelajaran di organisasi tempat kerja mereka adalah tinggi, sumbangan pembelajaran

daripada faktor-faktor intrinsik, seperti perlakuan belajar dan elemen-elemen kejayaan kerjaya subjektif, adalah lebih besar daripada faktor-faktor ekstrinsik, seperti peluang pembelajaran. Kaitan antara persepsi kejayaan dalam kerjaya, perlakuan pembelajaran, dan peluang pembelajaran dengan organisasi pembelajaran masing-masing menunjukkan perkaitan linear positif yang kuat, sederhana dan lemah. Ujian selanjutnya telah menunjukkan kedua-dua model persepsi kejayaan kerjaya dan organisasi pembelajaran sebagaistabil dan agak sempurna. Persepsi kejayaan kerjaya bagi perlakuan pembelajaran dan organisasi pembelajaran tidak mempunyai apa-apa kesan terus; manakala pengantaraan persepsi kejayaan kerjaya dengan peluang pembelajaran dan organisasi pembelajaran menunjukkan kewujudan kesan terus.

Beberapa kesimpulan dapat dibuat hasil daripada dapatan kajian ini. Pertamanya, dua perlakuan pembelajaran utama pengurus-pengurus adalah: (i) pembelajaran terancang, iaitu kebolehan para pengurus berusaha untuk menguruskan pembelajaran bagi diri sendiri, and (ii) pembelajaran bermakna iaitu penyelesaian masalah semasa bekerja dengan mempunyai pengetahuan yang cukup mengenai pekerjaan tersebut, yang senantiasa dikemaskinikan melalui refleksi dan proses-proses mental yang mendalam. Namun demikian, pembelajaran bercorak arahan merupakan pilihan pembelajaran yang terakhir disebabkan tanggapan negatif bahawa menunggu arahan daripada pihak atasan mencerminkan ketidakcekapan seseorang membuat keputusan. Kedua, peluang pembelajaran utama adalah tanggungjawab yang tinggi dan perhubungan yang tidak bersifat autoriti yang memberikan pengurus-pengurus peluang pembelajaran yang cukup semasa bekerja. Ketiga, elemen-elemen subjektif dalam persepsi kejayaan kerjaya seperti



hubungan di antara rakan sekerja dapat juga mempengaruhi organisasi pembelajaran menyeluruh. Akhir kata, pengesanan analisa faktor terhadap organisasi pembelajaran menyeluruh menunjukkan bahawa persepsi kejayaan kerjaya telah mewujudkan kesan positif yang paling tinggi sedangkan rintangan dan pembelajaran berorientasikan arahan dari pihak atasan membawa kesan negatif terhadap pembelajaran di kalangan pengurus. Hasil dapatan ini akan dapat membantu pakar-pakar pembangunan manusia membuat perancangan yang lebih teliti bagi menjayakan sebarang aktiviti pembelajaran pengurus yang dapat mengurangkan kesan negatif dan membina kesan positif bagi memperbaiki tahap kepuasan kerjaya serta infrastruktur organisasi pembelajaran. Justerunya, para pengurus dapat meningkatkan kebolehan mengurus, mengarah dan memudahkan pembelajaran sendiri serta memainkan peranan sebagai tenaga pengajar lanjutan untuk memimpin secara efektif pembelajaran oleh pekerja-pekerja di organisasi pengurus-pengurus tersebut bekerja.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Date: April 2008



## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

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**VIKINESWARAN A. MANIAM**

Date: April 2008



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CCP	Chemicals and Chemical Based Products
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Fit Index
CR	Critical Ratio
CSP	Career Success Perception
DCP	Developmental Challenge Profile
DF	Degree of Freedom
E&E	Electrical and Electronic
EDA	Exploratory Data Analysis
EL	Emergent Learning
FA	Factor Analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLM	General Linear Model
HOD	Head of Department
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
ILE	Intrinsic Learning Effects
IOL	Instruction Oriented Learning





KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LBV	Learning Behavior
LDRLOP	Leader Learning Opportunities
LOP	Learning Opportunities
MDA	Multivariate Data Analysis
MIDA	Malaysia Industrial Development Authority
MLE	Maximum Likelihood Estimation
MLV	Managerial Learning Variables
MOL	Meaning Oriented Learning
NPC	National Productivity Corporation
OBLs	Obstacles and Leader Support
OBSLOP	Obstacle Learning Opportunities
OJP	Objective Job Performance
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PCD	Perceived Career Development
PGFI	Parsimonious Goodness Fit Index
PL	Planned Learning
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SJP	Subjective Job Performance
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TASKLOP	Task Related Characteristics Learning Opportunities
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index