

Evaluating the Relationship between the Categories of the Obstacle Model of Creating Iraqi Learning Organizations (Case Study of Al-Qadisiyah and Kufa Universities)

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Purpose: Obstacles of creating learning organization cause a sharp decline in the performance of organizations, especially in educational organizations. Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between the categories of the obstacle model of creating learning organizations.

Methodology: This study in terms of purpose was applied and in terms of implementation method was descriptive from type of correlation. The research population were professors from Al-Qadisiyah and Kufa universities of Iraq with number 720 people and with using Cochran's formula, the sample size was estimated to be 251 people, which this number were selected by available sampling method. The research tool was a researcher-made questionnaire of barriers to obstacle of creating learning organizations with 69 questions, which data obtained its implementation were analyzed by methods of exploratory factor analysis and partial least squares in SPSS and Smart PLS software.

Findings: The findings showed that the factor load of all questions was higher than 0.50 and significant, and the correlation coefficients of the categories of causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, central phenomenon, strategies and consequences were less than 0.45, and indicating their non-overlapping. Also, content validity ratio and Cronbach and combined reliability of the categories were estimated higher than 0.70 and 0.80, respectively. In addition, according to the indicators of commonality and redundancy, the obstacle model of creating learning organizations had a good fit and the effect of causal conditions, contextual conditions and intervening conditions on central phenomenon, the effect of central phenomenon on strategies and the effect of strategies on outcomes were significant ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The designed obstacle model of creating learning organizations can help to university officials in designing programs to remove obstacle of creating learning organizations

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1. Introduction

Today, organizations and businesses find themselves in unstable conditions influenced by rapid changes in knowledge and technology, where changes not only occur faster than before but are also discontinuous. Such changes do not persist and do not follow a logical sequence. In an era of change discontinuity, organizations that continuously rebuild themselves, rediscover themselves, and re-energize themselves will be successful; these characteristics describe the traits of learning organizations. That is, organizations that are accustomed to organizational learning and focus on acquiring knowledge and organizational learning (Al-Atwi, Amankwah-Amoah, & Khan, 2021). In recent years, a precise definition of a learning organization has not been provided. Most researchers believe it to be a process that forms over time, accompanied by knowledge acquisition and performance improvement, although behavioral changes are required for learning, while others insist that new ways of thinking are sufficient. Some have mentioned information processing as a mechanism through which learning occurs, while others, like Ray Stata, have suggested shared insights, organizational routines, and even memory (Garvin, 1993). A learning organization is one that has become skilled in creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge and modifies its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights (Anderson, Ross, Macrae, & Wiig, 2020). On the other hand, numerous characteristics of learning organizations have been identified, including an organization's unfamiliarity with problems, having creative and learning employees, having a dynamic mental model, simultaneously employing experience and science, and integrating individual and organizational goals. Also, many views have been presented regarding the advantages that the concept of learning will bring to an organization. Literature review shows that organizational learning can lead to improved collective and public learning in the organization, improved individual and group behaviors, and ultimately efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of the organization. Clearly, organizations with such characteristics and advantages are ideal and desirable organizations (Annarelli, Battistella, & Nonino, 2020).

The world around us and the environment in which various organizations operate is becoming more and more complex every day. Increasing and widespread changes in our lifestyles and values have affected us, and organizations have been forced to adapt to this changing environment by keeping up with the rapid advances in knowledge and technology, and by taking principled and thought-based actions (Herbane, 2019). Accordingly, organizational leaders are forced to examine the current situation at the foundation of their organization and reconsider their relationships with all stakeholders, including customers, competitors, suppliers, and employees. Organizations strive to sustain their existence through the learning and training of their employees, not only to maintain their existence but also to effectively influence the turbulent environment around them and realize organizational learning models (Argote, Lee, & Park, 2020). A learning organization is a place where employees are continuously involved in creating outcomes they truly desire, using their capacities. It's a place where new and broad patterns of thinking are nurtured, and hopes and dreams freely exist, and employees continuously learn how to learn from each other (Fridell, Edwin, Von Schreeb, & Saulnier, 2020). Many researchers share common features in learning organizations, including a) open communication, b) risk-taking, c) support for learning, d) teamwork, e) encouragement for learning, f) training and educational environment, g) knowledge management. Research has shown that organizations focused on systemic features of communicative, cultural, and structural aspects are likely to achieve higher levels of organizational performance, adaptability to change, and creativity compared to organizations that rely solely on learning and its applications (Hecht, Biehl, Barnett, & Neff, 2019).

Raha and Habibi (2022) conducted a study titled "Investigation of the Characteristics of Learning Organizations with a Focus on Knowledge Management Subsystems and Technology and the Relationship between Organizational Entrepreneurship." This article, derived from three themes (Peter Senge's characteristics of learning organizations, investigation of the relationship between organizational entrepreneurship and the characteristics of learning organizations, and investigation of the characteristics of learning organizations with a focus on knowledge management subsystems and technology), defines learning organizations from Peter Senge's perspective and examines their main characteristics with a focus on

knowledge management subsystems and the relationship between organizational entrepreneurship. Therefore, organizations that learn earlier, faster, and better than their competitors are more successful. This is why the concept of the learning organization and organizational learning has emerged and grown rapidly in recent years. The research results showed that organizations, instead of their traditional behaviors and movements, which at best included training, become organizations that constantly learn, i.e., they use their effort towards learning as a competitive advantage.

Badakhsh (2021) conducted a study titled "Investigation of Entrepreneurial Learning Organizations and Organizational Commitment of Employees in Health Insurance Offices of Qazvin Province." This research aimed to examine the relationship between organizational learning and the socialization and organizational commitment of health insurance employees in Qazvin province using a descriptive-correlational method. The population was all employees of health insurance in Qazvin province (70 people). Findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between organizational learning and both socialization and organizational commitment of health insurance employees in Qazvin province, and organizational learning could predict changes in socialization and organizational commitment. Moreover, there was a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of shared vision, organizational culture, work and team learning, strategy, participatory leadership, employee competency growth, and organizational structure with socialization and organizational commitment of health insurance employees in Qazvin province. The findings also showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational learning and the socialization and organizational commitment of health insurance employees in Qazvin province.

Ameri and Abdoli (2020) conducted a study titled "Learning Organizations and Their Effect on Organizational Performance and Innovation (Case Study: Northeast Shahroud Railway Administration)." This research is about learning organizations and their effect on organizational performance and innovation. The research is applied in nature, as its results can be practically used. Since this research described and studied what exists, it is descriptive in terms of data collection method. For data collection, a field method was employed, and the population of this study was the Northeast Shahroud Railway Administration. The data collection tool was a questionnaire. The research results showed barriers to creating a learning organization include efforts to create and share knowledge, lack of employee participation, insufficient skills and expertise, and human resource management methods.

Saadat and Yazdkhasti (2020) conducted a study titled "Creating Learning Organizations: A Vital Necessity." This article addresses the necessity of creating learning organizations in today's world, initially defining learning, organizational learning, and learning organizations, and then reviewing their emergence, evolutionary process, leadership role, and barriers to creating learning organizations.

Evenseth, Sydnes, and Gausdal (2022) conducted a study titled "Creating Organizational Flexibility Through Organizational Learning: A Systematic Review." This research reviewed the literature on learning and organizational resilience, identifying the main themes and the relationship between these two concepts. Data were analyzed using NVIVO qualitative research software. The analysis of 41 empirical review articles, 12 conceptual articles, and 6 literature review articles showed that learning is primarily related to adaptability capabilities. However, it is evident that learning is related to all three stages of resilience that organizations need for resilience growth: anticipation, coping, and adaptation. Effective learning depends on proper management of experiential learning, a systemic approach to learning, the organizational ability to learn from failure, and the presence of a context that facilitates organizational learning.

Namaki, Nateghinia, Banar, and Akbari Dilmaghani (2019) conducted a study titled "An Ontological Review on the Role of Knowledge Management in Learning Organizations." The research results showed that to become a learning institution, every organization must consider the principles related to learning organizations and information management. Therefore, both were emphasized here. This article attempted to connect these two issues systematically and introduce a conceptual model. The information management method requires the development of knowledge, documentation of knowledge, delivery and distribution, and dissemination of knowledge, and finally, the implementation of knowledge.

Jafarzadeh Ghadimi, Enayati, and Salehi (2018) conducted a study titled "Investigation of the Impact of Learning Organization Components on Organizational Innovation (Case Study: Islamic Azad University)." The aim of this research was to investigate the impact of learning organization components on innovation at Islamic Azad University. This research was a descriptive survey. The research population consisted of all faculty members of Islamic Azad University Shabestar in 2016, with an initial sample size of 271 people and 160 people selected by stratified random sampling using Cochran's formula. Standard questionnaires for learning organizations and organizational innovation by Saatchi and colleagues were used for data collection. The results indicated a direct and significant impact of learning organization components (transparency, empowerment and leadership commitment, experimentation and reward, teamwork, and group problem solving) on organizational innovation and a good fit of the model.

The literature review and research background showed that no research has been conducted on the investigation of barriers to learning organizations among universities in Iraq, and there is a noticeable research gap in the relevant literature. Therefore, this article evaluated the relationship between the categories of the model of barriers to creating learning organizations in Iraq (case study of Al-Qadisiyah and Kufa Universities). Additionally, barriers to creating learning organizations cause a significant decline in the performance of organizations, especially educational organizations. Thus, the aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between the categories of the model of barriers to creating learning organizations.

2. Methodology

This study was applied in purpose and descriptive-correlational in execution. The research population consisted of 720 professors from Al-Qadisiyah and Kufa universities in Iraq, and a sample size of 251 individuals was estimated using Cochran's formula; these individuals were selected through convenience sampling. In convenience sampling, members of the population who are easily accessible to researchers are chosen as the sample.

The instrument used in this research was a researcher-made questionnaire on the barriers to creating learning organizations, containing 69 questions. These 69 questions were categorized into five categories: causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and outcomes. The questionnaire was developed based on theoretical foundations with the assistance of several experts and specialists. A five-point Likert scale was used for responses, with 1 for "very low," 2 for "low," 3 for "medium," 4 for "high," and 5 for "very high." The score for each category was calculated by summing the scores of the questions within that category, with a higher score indicating a greater presence of that characteristic or category. Experts and specialists confirmed the face validity of the researcher-made questionnaire on the barriers to creating learning organizations, and its reliability results are available in the findings section.

The procedural steps of this research were as follows: Initially, with the assistance of several experts and specialists and based on documents related to learning organizations, a researcher-made questionnaire on the barriers to creating learning organizations was designed. Subsequent arrangements were made for administering the questionnaire among the professors of Al-Qadisiyah and Kufa universities in Iraq. The importance and necessity of the research were explained to the professors selected through convenience sampling, and they were assured about the ethical considerations. Finally, they were requested to respond to the researcher-made questionnaire on the barriers to creating learning organizations with utmost care and completeness, for which they were thanked and appreciated for their time and participation in the research after completing the questionnaire.

In this research, the data obtained from the administration of the researcher-made questionnaire on the barriers to creating learning organizations were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and partial least squares in SPSS and Smart PLS software.

3. Findings

The findings showed that the factor loadings of all questions were above 0.50 and significant. Therefore, no question from the 69-question researcher-made questionnaire on the barriers to creating learning organizations, which included six categories: causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and outcomes, was eliminated (Table 1).

Table 1. Factor Loading Results of the Researcher-Made Questionnaire on Barriers to Creating Learning Organizations

Category	The political environment within the organization	Factor Loading	t-value	Results
Causal Conditions	Lack of a shared vision in the organization	0.893	21.012	Significant
	Inadequate organizational climate for learning	0.704	8.246	Significant
	Exclusive and non-competitive environment of the organization	0.887	3.654	Significant
	Presence of non-systemic thinking in the organization	0.789	17.196	Significant
	Gradual acceptance of problems and threats	0.881	13.733	Significant
	Individualism in the organization	0.753	10.780	Significant
	Lack of a culture of participation in the organization	0.896	7.635	Significant
	Lack of individual effort for transformation	0.912	6.628	Significant
	Insufficient attention to team learning	0.874	21.012	Significant
	Lack of necessary capability for knowledge transfer at all organizational levels	0.893	3.741	Significant
	Lack of alignment between employees' visions for the organization's future and managers' visions	0.727	6.445	Significant
	Lack of open communication and information exchange in the organization	0.903	4.501	Significant
	Limitation on accessibility to information	0.704	4.278	Significant
	Lack of encouragement for employees to share experiences and information with each other	0.889	5.208	Significant
	Lack of formation of think tanks and problem-solving groups	0.803	10.780	Significant
	Provision of scattered and unplanned training	0.659	6.590	Significant
	Lack of effectiveness evaluation of learning programs	0.893	10.125	Significant
	Insufficient supervision over the implementation of learning programs	0.728	7.493	Significant
	Failure to implement strategic training and learning programs for employees	0.946	11.002	Significant
	Contextual Conditions	Lack of managerial stability in the organization	0.704	4.278
Lack of meritocracy in selecting managers		0.769	5.208	Significant
Lack of appropriate budget allocation		0.612	17.196	Significant
Lack of attention to experiential records		0.924	7.039	Significant
Lack of attention to managerial records		0.876	11.156	Significant
Failure to educate and nurture innovative and creative individuals		0.834	10.977	Significant
Managers' lack of welcome to the suggestion system		0.796	11.768	Significant
Managers' disregard for criticisms		0.858	13.368	Significant
Senior managers' lack of supervision over the realization of strategies related to organizational units		0.789	10.398	Significant
Inability of managers to implement suitable suggestions and ideas		0.916	3.367	Significant
Failure to use appropriate techniques for implementing strategic training and learning programs for employees	0.777	12.594	Significant	

	Failure to create the necessary organizational environment for honest and free expressions of employees about work issues	0.793	4.692	Significant
	Lack of opportunity for employees to express diverse and constructive thoughts and opinions	0.897	16.279	Significant
	Wrong thinking habits of employees	0.768	10.327	Significant
	Low self-belief among various organization employees	0.754	6.321	Significant
	Lack of freedom for employees in performing job duties	0.907	11.620	Significant
	Failure to provide organized and extensive training opportunities to employees	0.893	4.296	Significant
	Lack of job rotation for employees in positions they qualify for	0.804	9.371	Significant
	Lack of participation of all employees in decision-making	0.659	7.512	Significant
	Lack of invitation to external elites	0.907	6.628	Significant
Intervening Conditions	Lack of training for employees by external elites	0.905	8.417	Significant
	Failure to develop organizational vision and missions considering available resources and capacities	0.649	7.635	Significant
	Failure to develop organizational vision and missions in line with the country's development perspective	0.765	16.279	Significant
	Lack of sufficient time for learning	0.814	3.267	Significant
	Repetition of organizational mistakes and failure to use these mistakes for future corrections	0.632	9.594	Significant
	Waiting for transformation to be initiated by higher authorities	0.695	4.012	Significant
	Failure to utilize experiences and information from other organizations	0.728	7.493	Significant
	Ethnic and tribal preferences	0.946	11.002	Significant
	Administrative corruption in Iraq	0.763	6.957	Significant
	Special attention of managers to the experiential and managerial records of employment applicants	0.769	8.208	Significant
	Invitation of external elites to train organization's employees	0.516	8.239	Significant
	Use of managers who welcome suggestions and criticisms	0.654	3.487	Significant
	Senior managers' supervision over the realization of strategies related to organizational units	0.503	12.552	Significant
Strategies	Ability of managers to implement suitable suggestions and ideas	0.893	21.012	Significant
	Creating a shared vision within the organization	0.876	11.156	Significant
	Achieving managerial stability in the organization	0.834	10.977	Significant
	Special attention to team learning	0.796	11.768	Significant
	Effort to transfer knowledge at all organizational levels	0.858	13.368	Significant
	Removing limitations on accessibility to information	0.789	10.398	Significant
	Utilization of experiences and information from other organizations	0.916	3.367	Significant
	Allocation of an appropriate budget for educating and nurturing innovative and creative individuals	0.777	12.594	Significant
	Application of the principle of meritocracy in selecting organizational managers	0.793	4.692	Significant
	Use of appropriate techniques for implementing strategic training and learning programs for employees	0.897	16.279	Significant
	Creating the necessary organizational environment for honest and free employee expressions about work issues	0.768	10.327	Significant
Consequences	Creating the necessary environment for employees to express diverse and constructive thoughts and opinions	0.754	6.321	Significant
	Allocating sufficient time for employee learning	0.907	11.620	Significant

Individual effort to create transformation in the organization	0.893	4.296	Significant
Encouraging employees to share experiences and information with each other	0.804	9.371	Significant
Providing sufficient freedom of action to employees in performing job duties	0.659	7.512	Significant
The political environment within the organization	0.907	6.628	Significant

The findings indicated that the correlation coefficients of the categories of causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, central phenomenon, strategies, and outcomes were less than 0.45, indicating no overlap among them (Table 2).

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients Results of the Categories of the Researcher-Made Questionnaire on Barriers to Creating Learning Organizations

Row	Category	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Causal Conditions	1					
2	Contextual Conditions	0.268	1				
3	Intervening Conditions	0.147	0.115	1			
4	Central Phenomenon	0.139	0.245	0.146	1		
5	Strategies	0.219	0.346	0.264	0.398	1	
6	Consequences	0.367	0.208	0.435	0.091	0.365	1

The findings demonstrated that the content validity ratio and Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of the categories were estimated to be above 0.70 and 0.80, respectively (Table 3).

Table 3. Content Validity Ratio and Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Results of the Categories of the Researcher-Made Questionnaire on Barriers to Creating Learning Organizations

Category	Content Validity Ratio	Cronbach's Reliability	Composite Reliability
Causal Conditions	0.894	0.890	0.934
Contextual Conditions	0.927	0.946	0.958
Intervening Conditions	0.815	0.935	0.946
Central Phenomenon	0.791	0.915	0.927
Strategies	0.846	0.877	0.910
Consequences	0.722	0.835	0.869

The findings showed that the communality and redundancy indices indicated a good fit of the model of barriers to creating learning organizations (Table 4).

Table 4. Communality and Redundancy Indices Results of the Categories of the Researcher-Made Questionnaire on Barriers to Creating Learning Organizations

Category	Communality Index	Redundancy Index
Causal Conditions	0.350	0.350
Contextual Conditions	0.437	0.437
Intervening Conditions	0.218	0.218
Central Phenomenon	0.093	0.093
Strategies	0.107	0.107
Consequences	0.263	0.258

The findings revealed that the effects of causal conditions, contextual conditions, and intervening conditions on the central phenomenon, the effect of the central phenomenon on strategies, and the effect of strategies on outcomes were significant (Figure 1 and Table 5) ($P < 0.05$).

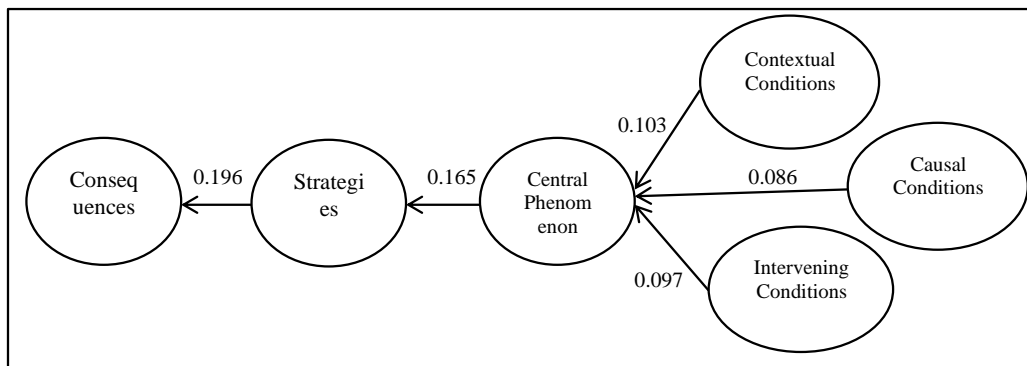


Figure 1. Model of Barriers to Creating Learning Organizations in the Path Coefficient Context

Table 5. Effects in the Model of Barriers to Creating Learning Organizations

Path	Path Coefficient	t-value	Result
Causal Conditions to Central Phenomenon	0.086	2.256	Significant
Contextual Conditions to Central Phenomenon	0.103	3.720	Significant
Intervening Conditions to Central Phenomenon	0.097	2.648	Significant
Central Phenomenon to Strategies	0.165	6.944	Significant
Strategies to Consequences	0.196	8.319	Significant

4. Conclusion

Given the importance of learning organizations in improving organizational standing and gaining competitive advantage, the aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between the categories of the model of barriers to creating learning organizations.

The findings indicated that the factor loading of all questions was above 0.50 and significant, and the correlation coefficients of the categories of causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, central phenomenon, strategies, and outcomes were less than 0.45, indicating no overlap among them. Additionally, the content validity ratio and Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of the categories were estimated to be above 0.70 and 0.80, respectively. Moreover, according to the communality and redundancy indices, the model of barriers to creating learning organizations had a good fit, and the effects of causal conditions, contextual conditions, and intervening conditions on the central phenomenon, the effect of the central phenomenon on strategies, and the effect of strategies on outcomes were significant. These findings are consistent with the findings of both domestic and international research, including Raha and Habibi (2022), Badakhsh (2021), Ameri and Abdoli (2020), Saadat and Yazdkhasti (2020), Evenseth et al. (2022), Namaki et al. (2019), and Jafarzadeh Ghadimi et al. (2018).

A learning organization is one in which individuals continuously develop their capacity, and it is a place where the desires and aspirations of the group are realized. Such an organization fundamentally and continuously has the ability to rejuvenate and sustain itself, characterized by learning over time, change, and transformation in performance. Learning organizations strive to sustain themselves through employee training and learning, not only to maintain their existence but also to effectively influence the stressful and challenging environment around them. Organizational learning is the development of capabilities among individuals in communication and problem-solving, and management's effort to create a learning organization is an effort to create a learning ideology. With the importance of learning in today's organizations, where it is regarded as the sole component

for organizational survival, it is essential for university managers to implement a learning organization strategy in their institutions to facilitate integrated learning among their members using the necessary tools. A learning organization operates by creating structures and devising strategies for enhancing organizational learning, responding to the environment more quickly than scheduled, and effectively collecting and managing information for use.

Research findings indicate that today's environmental changes compel organizations to continuously seek the best solutions and practices for adaptation. One of the strategies is to emphasize continuous employee learning to achieve employee empowerment, commitment, and ultimately organizational goals with maximum effectiveness (Al-Atwi et al., 2021). Indeed, previous research results have shown that in recent decades, especially in recent years, proper human resource management has become so important that it prioritizes other management topics (Bijari, Manzari Tavakoli, Medhizadeh, & Salajeghe, 2022). However, developing human resources and creating conditions that foster a learning organization is a fundamental necessity. In this context, organizations focused on systemic features of communicative, cultural, and structural aspects are likely to achieve higher levels of organizational performance, adaptability to change, and creativity compared to organizations that rely solely on learning and its applications (Hecht et al., 2019).

Another important point is that in learning organizations, all individuals have the freedom to act and are eager for knowledge and learning. In such organizations, individuals exchange information and knowledge to help each other grow and reach a high level. In this organization, information flows quickly and accurately, and existing communications enable it to act quickly, wisely, efficiently, and intelligently in the business environment. In such circumstances, the organization and its employees are always developing their capacity to achieve expected results; a place where new and innovative thinking patterns are nurtured, desires and aspirations are realized, and individuals continuously learn how to help each other learn and grow together. Such an organization not only supports the motivation of its members for learning and creativity but also promotes ways and methods to enhance, align, and transfer learning and creativity among organizational members.

Every research is faced with limitations, and the limitations of this study include being confined to professors at Al-Qadisiyah and Kufa universities in Iraq and using a non-random convenience sampling method. Therefore, it is recommended for future researchers to investigate the model of barriers to creating learning organizations in other universities and compare their results with this study. Another research suggestion is to use the standard questionnaire of the current research to measure the barriers to creating learning organizations and to benefit from appropriate solutions to address the identified barriers. The last practical suggestion is the design of the model of barriers to creating learning organizations in non-educational organizations. The results of this study have clarified some aspects of the barriers to creating learning organizations in universities, which have many practical implications, and university administrators and officials can benefit from it. Consequently, the designed model of barriers to creating learning organizations can assist university officials in designing programs to remove barriers to creating a learning organization.

Ethical Considerations

Necessary ethical principles in research were observed.

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Authors' Contributions

All activities of this study were carried out collaboratively.

Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest.

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