

**Developing High Performance Teams through Learning Organization
Practices in an Insurance Organization: A Case Study of CNT Company**

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Abstract

This paper presents the role of a learning organization in developing the high performance team (HPT) which is very crucial in increasing the competitiveness of the organization. To drive the business growth of CNT Company, the CEO determined that the business direction should be to double the size of the Consumer Lines Business in the next five years. Agency distribution is one of the core distribution channels for Consumer Lines with high potential for growth. The most challenging task was to elevate the Agency Team's performance. The researcher proposed the concept of a learning organization to transform the teams into a high performance teams (HPT). To study HPT development, the researcher used learning organization building blocks as core tools. Action Research methods and Organization Development Interventions were also used. Research results showed that the development of learning organization building blocks supported HPT development. The research results demonstrated positive relationship patterns between the building blocks and each HPT behavior, which provided an understanding of the impact of building blocks on HPT behavior development in each category. The research outcomes also revealed the positive impact of HPT behavior on productivity.

Key words: learning organization, high performance team, supportive learning environment, concrete learning process and practices, leader-reinforced learning

Introduction

The world is becoming more connected and complex. Therefore, it is difficult to separate any part of the world from the effects of globalization. The world economy is linked through financial networks, telecommunication networks, and supply chain networks at the global, regional, and country levels. To remain competitive, organizations need to design working environments that stimulate employee development through a continuous learning process. Leaders need to find a way to transform teams to become high performance teams (HPT) where team members possess a strong team commitment

to reach the shared vision and common goals. The learning process and system play a key role in supporting management and employees to acquire, generate, learn, share, and store new knowledge and to adapt the knowledge to correct their previous errors, in order to thrive in the changing environment.

This research was a case study that initiated from the discussion with the CNT management about the challenges ahead. CNT is a leading international insurance company that has been in Thailand for more than 70 years, operating a non-life insurance business. The researcher believed that in order to systematically support the CEO's vision and to keep the business growing, it was necessary for CNT to elevate its team performance to a higher level. The concept of team development through the learning organization and HPT behaviors was introduced to CNT management. The purpose of the study was to assess the relationship between the learning organization building blocks and HPT behaviors under the Thai working culture.

Literature Review

The literature review covers the relevant studies in teams, team dynamics and development, high performance teams (HPT). It also presents theories related to the learning organization and its practices.

Definition of Team, Types of Team, and High Performance Team

Teams have been used in response to competitive challenges (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Teams have become key ingredients of an organization's success, as teams provide more flexibility and responsiveness in reacting to the dynamic market place. It is necessary for the organizations to integrate people, their capabilities, knowledge, skills, experiences, and perspectives (Irani & Sharp, 1997). A team is a group of people who work with commitment, complementary skills, and interdependence to accomplish shared outcomes and common goals (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Ketzenbach & Smith, 1993; Savelsbergh *et al.*, 2010). Teams bring the positive synergy of their members who acquire complementary skills and experience, and their joint contributions are higher than the sum of individuals (Castka, P. Bamber, C.J., Sharp, J.M., & Belohoubek, P., 2001); Senior & Swailes, 2004). The sum of intelligence exhibited by teams is greater than simply the aggregation of individual members (Senge, 1993).

Katzenbach & Smith (1993) and Kur (1996) define the high performance team as the team that produces extraordinary outcomes compared to similar teams based on only reasonable expectations. Being a HPT means that team members present strong commitment to the shared vision, purpose and goals (Colenso, 1997; Kets De Vries, 1999), possess high interpersonal skills (Colenso, 1997; Kur, 1996), work with high flexibility and creativity (Colenso, 2000), have complementary competencies (Margerison & McCann, 1984), and practice interactive and open communication (Colenso, 1997; Chen, 2002).

Team Core Behaviors and Team Learning Behaviors

This section reviews the studies that explore the development of three core behaviors and the collaboration between those behaviors in supporting team learning.

Interpersonal Trust

Working as a team requires a high level of collaboration. Interpersonal trust is a key ingredient in developing and building strong collaborative behaviors among team members (Shockley-Zalaback, Ellis, & Winograd, 2000). Team members need to find different alternatives in creating “team spirit” that enfolds all members in a deep, continual, and mutual relationship to sustain their cooperative behaviors (Erdem, Ozen, & Atsan, 2003). Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, & Neale (1996) suggest that the team needs to establish trust before team members can have interactive and open communication in sharing the information to develop useful decisions. Politis (2003) also points out that there is a positive relationship between interpersonal trust, communication, knowledge acquisition and sharing, and problem solving.

Interactive and Open Communication

Team communication is one of the key characteristics which helps to support team performance (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Savelsbergh *et al.*, 2010; Senior & Swailes, 2004). Communication contains two key aspects: the ability to speak out, and open communication (Senior & Swailes, 2004; Wheelan, 2005). This characteristic supports team members in learning from each other and in daring to share the data. Building a team with interactive and open communication can influence interpersonal trust (Gardiner & Whiting, 1997), team commitment, job satisfaction, team productivity and performance.

Team Commitment

Team commitment is similar to organizational commitment but it happens at the team level rather than at the organization level. It is a psychological attachment which each individual feels toward the team (Pearce & Herbig, 2004). Mowday, Porter, & Steers (1982) define organizational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with an involvement in a particular organization. Three key characteristics are: (a) a certain belief in, and acceptance of, the organization's objectives and values; (b) a willingness to exert extra effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain the status of the organization. This definition is also compatible with team commitment (Bishop & Scott, 2000).

Team Learning Behavior

Team learning is a critical determinant for the organization's success because it helps teams to gain a greater competitive advantage and raises a team's performance (Chan, Pearson, & Entekin, 2003) (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Edmondson (1999) summarizes that team learning behavior has a positive relationship with team performance. In building the learning behavior, teams must stimulate the feeling of familiarity, interpersonal relationship, and trust among team members. This feeling reduces the fears of taking any risk to admit and share previous mistakes and errors in order to gain feedback from team members. He further calls this belief 'psychological safety'. In driving team performance and encouraging team members to develop their learning behavior, a team leader's role is to force learning (Garvin, 2000) and provide support to the teams (Senior & Swales, 2004). The team leaders should lead, monitor and coach the team members and provide feedback to them (Savelsbergh *et al.*, 2010).

Learning Organization

The term 'Learning organization' has become a popular concept since the 1990s. A number of scholars have defined the scope and concepts of a learning organization, from various perspectives. Some of them present the concept by using models (Critten, 1994; Garratt, 1994; Garvin, D., Edmondson, A., and Gino, F., 2008), while others focus on outcomes (Burgoyne *et al.*, 1994; Calvert *et al.*, 1994; Dunphy, Turner, & Crawford, 1997) and its processes (Buckler, 1996; Campbell & Cairns, 1994; Garvin, 1993; Garvin, 2000; Örténblad, 2001). Even though there is no consensus as to a definition of a learning organization, it is clear that the learning organization has the following fundamental characteristics, as described by researchers:

“The process of behavior change in acquiring, transferring, and utilizing the knowledge to create continuous learning and development in order to improve the operation effectiveness and efficiency, and to attain the goals” (Garvin, 1993).

To enhance HPT behaviors, the effective leader’s role is to support the development of enhanced environment, culture, communication, and processes and procedures in order to raise the level of team collaboration, knowledge creation, productivity and performance (Gardiner & Whiting, 1997; Phillips, 2003; Song, Kim, and Kolb, 2009).

A Pragmatic Learning Organization

Garvin, D., Edmonson, A., and Gino, F., (2008) and Goh (1998) each present a version of a pragmatic learning organization model to make it work for the business by using building block formats. Both models are simple and easy to understand and implement in the organization. Goh (1998) focuses on three core fundamentals: organizational design supported learning, employee competencies and knowledge acquisition, and clarity and support for mission and vision. These have three main activities: knowledge transfer, shared leadership, and experimental organizational culture. Garvin *et al.* (2008) also put the models into three blocks: the supportive learning environment, the concrete learning processes and practices, and the leader-reinforced learning.

Theoretical Framework

This research aims to develop an understanding of the relationship between “High Performance Team”, and “Learning Organization”. According to the initial system analysis and the literature review, the building blocks of learning are influential (Garvin, 1993) to the development of HPT behaviors. The framework model for this research begins with the independent variables, and then considers the influence on dependent variables (Figure 1). The independent variables represent the pragmatic approach in implementing a learning organization. This Organization Development Intervention (ODI) provides an opportunity to research whether a learning organization energizes the branch managers and team members to develop the supportive learning environment, the

concrete learning process and practices, as well as the leader-reinforced learning and using these behaviors to develop HPT behaviors.

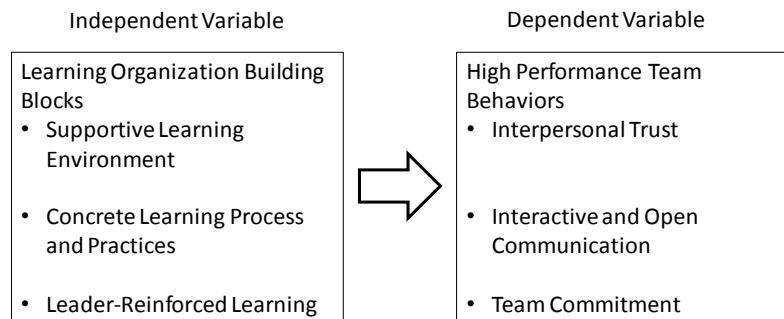


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the relationship among building blocks in a learning organization and high performance team behaviors

Action Research Framework

The process of how to relate these variables in terms of learning organization building blocks to the development of HPT behaviors will be the context of the action research in the CNT organization through three ODI stages. The first stage is Pre-ODI. The main purposes of this stage is to identify the problems, gather data and conduct a preliminary diagnosis, provide feedback to the management, and engage in joint diagnosis of the problems. The OD Intervention (ODI) stage presents the implementation of intervention activity. The main objectives of the ODI process are to develop the quality of learning organization building blocks and develop the skills of branch managers and team members. The Post-ODI stage will assess the factors that impact on the development of HPT behaviors after the development of learning organization in the branches.

Research Questions

This research studies the relationship between HPT behaviors and a learning organization. The following research questions are posed:

1. To what extent is interpersonal trust improved after the development of learning organization building blocks and the implementation of organization development intervention?
2. To what extent is interactive and open communication improved after the development of learning organization building blocks and the implementation of organizational development intervention?

3. To what extent is team commitment improved after the development of learning organization building blocks and the implementation of an organization development intervention?
4. To what extent is productivity improved after the development of HPT behaviors?
5. To what extent are the learning organization building blocks used as a vehicle in developing HPT behaviors?

Research Methods

This paper applied both quantitative and qualitative research methods. For the quantitative research method, the survey questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants to address the proposed research questions. The data collection was conducted during Pre and Post ODI. For the qualitative research method, two research techniques, participant interviews and team behavioral change observations were used in the qualitative data collection to gain deeper feedback and understanding from the participants. These techniques aim at measuring the perception of participants of the learning organization building blocks and the development of HPT behaviors during the course of the action research. This research adapted four key strategies (Johnson, 1997) to promote the qualitative research validity. These methods are triangulation, data triangulation, reflexivity, and participant feedback (Johnson, 1997; Morrow, 2005).

Instruments

For the quantitative research method, two quantitative surveys were developed and used to support the quantitative research method in this study. First, the Learning Organization Survey which had been developed to assess the organization against criteria for being a learning organization in comparison to the determined benchmarks (Garvin, D., Edmonson, A., and Gino, F., 2008). This instrument was used to measure the conditions of independent variables. Second, the High Performance Team Survey was developed from various sources, such as literature reviews, existing questionnaires, and the conceptual framework to match the research requirement. This instrument aims to measure the level of interpersonal trust, interactive and open communication, and team commitment of branch managers and team members.

Both instruments were adjusted to fit Thai culture. The instruments were translated into the Thai. The validation procedures involved an initial consultation with

three OD experts and a statistician in order to ensure the correctness of contents and the consistency of the contents between the original version and the Thai version. A pilot study was conducted with 15 employees in the focal company. Both questionnaires were reliable with the overall Cronbach's alpha: $\alpha = .917$ for the Learning Organization Survey and $\alpha = .981$ for the High Performance Team Survey.

For the qualitative research method, the In-depth Interview Questions on Learning Organization and High Performance Team were designed for both branch managers and team members. This instrument was used during the Pre-ODI and Post ODI stages. This instrument was translated into Thai and reviewed by OD experts and a statistician to ensure its validity, reliability and correctness of contents.

Participants of the Study

There were thirty four participants from six branches in different regions: North, Northeast, and East participated in this study. They were randomly selected on the basis of four key selection criteria, namely sales volume, portfolio mix, geographic, and team composition and size, agreed by the researcher and management in order to minimize the bias and variance in participant selection. All participants participated in the ODI process and the quantitative data collection.

Hill, C., Thompson, B., Hess, S., Knox, S. Williams, E., and Ladany, N. (2005) recommend a minimum study sample size of eight to fifteen participants, and one or two interviews with each participant. To gain a better understanding about the studied phenomenon, the researcher engaged twenty four selected participants or 70.5% of the total participants, in in-depth interview sessions. Twenty four participants were randomly selected from six branches and each group contained four participants: one branch manager as a group leader and three employees working in the branch. Their feedback was used in the qualitative data analysis.

Research Findings

Research findings indicated that the ODI created a significant impact on the learning organization building blocks and HPT behavior development. There was clearly supportive evidence from both quantitative and qualitative data analysis to support the impact of learning organization building blocks on HPT behaviors.

Learning Organization Building Blocks Development

Quantitative Data Analysis

Both the Paired Sample Statistics and a Paired Sample Test were used to measure the development of learning organization building blocks after the ODI. The results in Table 1 presents the development of the concrete learning process and practices and leader-reinforced learning with the mean gains 0.51050 and 0.39706, respectively. Only the supportive learning environment demonstrated the negative result of mean due to a single branch containing a unique team composition. Three staff members were very new in the positions and they might require additional time to adjust themselves and develop supportive learning environment.

Table 1: Paired Sample Statistics and Paired Sample Test on the Learning Organization Building Blocks between the Pre and Post ODI

Learning Organization Building Blocks	Mean (Post ODI)	SD (Post ODI)	Mean (Pre-ODI)	SD (Pre-ODI)	Variance	SD (Variance)
Supportive Learning Environment	3.7390	.31738	3.8235	.34283	-.08456	.38370
Concrete Learning Process and Practices	4.2489	.56548	3.7384	.48187	.51050	.50809
Leader-Reinforced Learning	4.5000	.63440	4.1029	.88894	.39706	.70809

Qualitative Data Analysis

The consensual qualitative research (CQR) data analysis step was applied in the qualitative data analysis. The interview data is segmented to reflect the learning organization building block domain and is categorized into core ideas based on four supportive learning environment conditions, three processes of concrete learning process and practices, and three tasks of the leader-reinforced learning (Garvin, 2000). The results

of qualitative data analysis in Table 2 presents the positive development of learning organization building blocks. The result of each building block presents a significant shift of participants' feedback from "Very Low" and "Low" to "Moderate", "High", and "Very High".

Table 2: Summary of the ODI Impact on the Learning Organization Building Blocks Development

Learning Organization Building Blocks	Scale	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
Supportive Learning Environment	Pre ODI	9	8	4	2	1
	Post ODI				9	15
Concrete Learning Process and Practices	Pre ODI	19	2	3		
	Post ODI	8	7	6	3	
Leader-Reinforced Learning	Pre ODI	20	3	1		
	Post ODI		2	4	18	

From the quantitative and qualitative data analysis results, it can be concluded that there was a development of learning organization building blocks after the ODI.

9.1. HPT Behavior Development

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis was based on the Paired Sample Statistics and Paired Sample Tests that were used to measure the development of HPT behaviors after the ODI. The results in Table 3 presents the development of the HPT behaviors with the mean gain by 0.25210, 0.40196, and 0.35292.

Table 3: Paired Sample Statistics and Paired Sample Test on the HPT Behaviors between the Pre and Post ODI

HPT Behaviors	Mean (Post ODI)	SD (Post ODI)	Mean (Pre-ODI)	SD (Pre-ODI)	Variance	SD (Variance)
Interpersonal Trust	4.8025	.64850	4.5504	.56340	.25210	.66896
Interactive and Open Communication	4.8529	.67764	4.4510	.69695	.40196	.63712
Team Commitment	4.9265	.70383	4.5735	.62924	.35294	.60025

Qualitative Data Analysis

The consensual qualitative research (CQR) data analysis step was applied in the qualitative data analysis. The interview data is segmented to reflect the learning HPT behaviors domain and is categorized into core ideas based on Trustworthy Behaviors (Abrams *et al.*, 2003) for interpersonal trust, the Ladder of Inference (Senge *et al.*, 1994) for interactive and open communication, and the individual’s identification involvement with the team (Bishop and Scott, 2000) for team commitment. The results of qualitative data analysis in Table 4 presents the positive development of learning organization building blocks. The result of each building block presents a significant shift of participants’ feedback from “Very Low” and “Low” to “Moderate”, “High”, and “Very High”.

Table 4: Summary of the ODI Impact on the High Performance Team Behavior Development

HPT Behaviors	Scale	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
Interpersonal Trust	Pre ODI	10	2	9	1	2
	Post ODI			7	12	5
Interactive and Open Communication	Pre ODI	2	12	9	1	
	Post ODI			6	10	8
Team Commitment	Pre ODI	20		3	1	
	Post ODI		3	11	10	

From the quantitative and qualitative data analysis results, it can be concluded that there was a development of HPT behaviors after the ODI.

9.2. The Relationship between Learning Organization and HPT Behaviors

The Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient test and the Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) Data Analysis Step were used to measure the relationships between the learning organization building blocks and HPT behaviors. Each data analysis section explained the impact of each learning organization building block development on each HPT behavior that helped to answer each research question.

Research Question 1: To What Extent is Interpersonal Trust Improved after the Development of Learning Organization Building Blocks and the Implementation of an Organization Development Intervention?

The result of Pearson’s Correlation demonstrates a significant correlation between learning organization building blocks development and interpersonal trust. All the

building blocks have a correlation with interpersonal trust, with a significance level less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Leader-reinforced learning demonstrates the highest correlation level of interpersonal trust among all building blocks (Table 5). Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the learning organization building blocks development and interpersonal trust.

The qualitative results reveal that the level of interpersonal trust increased when the branch manager is open to accept an unintentional mistake or error caused by the team members. Team members actively shared information with the team. They do not hesitate to report their failures even if they might be blamed or penalized by the branch managers. On the other hand, a supportive learning environment also plays a key role in stimulating the interpersonal trust level among team members when team members recognize and are open to accept the differences between themselves. This kind of environment nurtures and develops interpersonal trust among team members.

There is no clear supportive evidence from the qualitative data analysis after the ODI of the impact of concrete learning process and practices development on interpersonal trust. However, the participants' feedback revealed some common patterns of development between the concrete process and practices development and interpersonal trust. There is an improvement in interpersonal trust when team members talked about their daily issues, failures, mistakes, and problems to the team, and everybody got involved in finding solutions to fix them. The participants viewed this problem-solving activity as a part of the concrete learning process and practices.

Leader-reinforced learning is a critical building block that created the strongest impact on interpersonal trust development. Twenty participants mentioned their appreciation of the branch managers' listening skill improvement, which is one of the key skills in developing interpersonal trust. Team members felt more comfortable working with branch managers who actively listened. This led to a higher level of interpersonal trust between team members and branch managers.

Research Question 2: To What Extent is Interactive and Open Communication Improved after the Development of Learning Organization Building Blocks and the Implementation of Organizational Development Intervention?

The result of Pearson's Correlation demonstrated significant correlations between the learning organization building blocks development and interactive and open communication (Table 5). All building blocks have a correlation with interactive and

open communication with a significance level less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Leader-reinforced learning demonstrated the highest correlation level to interactive and open communication for all building blocks. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the learning organization building blocks development and interactive and open communication.

The qualitative data analysis presented a relationship pattern between the supportive learning environment development and the interactive and open communication, at two levels: branch manager level and team member level. For the branch manager level, team members actively interacted and communicated with the branch manager when he or she is open to accept any failure and error. The branch manager did not embarrass team members, thus reducing the fear of making mistakes. Branch managers engaged and stimulated team members to share ideas, comments, and experiences in order to find the proper solution to fix the mistakes.

At the team member level, the supportive learning environment development had a positive impact on interactive and open communication when there was a friendly working environment. This environment supported team members in sharing data, information, issues, ideas, and personal information between each other. All members had to be open to recognize and accept their differences. Nobody felt belittled or embarrassed by other team members when he or she shared his ideas and comments, asked naïve questions, or made some errors or failures.

Similar to research question 1, there was no firm relationship pattern established between the concrete learning process and practices and interactive and open communication. From the in-depth interviews, the interactive and open communication was improved among team members when somebody raised daily issues or problems in the meeting and asked for help from the team members. Sharing information gave team members a chance to know and learn more about each other. They normally worked together to develop appropriate solutions or change the working process to fix the issue or problem.

The qualitative data analysis describes the repetitive pattern of the influence of leader-reinforced learning on interactive and open communication. Branch managers play a key role in driving the team communication during daily working life. The skill of listening is the most critical skill in leading a discussion between branch manager and

team members. A sense of security and fairness is created when a branch manager actively listened to team members. They were willing to express their emotions and to share data, experiences, issues, and mistakes between branch managers and team members.

Research Question 3: To What Extent is Team Commitment Improved after the Development of Learning Organization Building Blocks and the Implementation of Organization Development Intervention?

The result of Pearson's Correlation demonstrates significant correlations between learning organization building blocks development and team commitment (Table 5). All building blocks have a correlation with team commitment with a significance level less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Leader-reinforced learning demonstrated the highest level of correlation to team commitment. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the learning organization building blocks development and team commitment.

From the qualitative data analysis, the improvement in the supportive learning environment has an indirect impact on team commitment improvement. A supportive environment urges all members to be active in communicating with each other. A free flow of communication brings everybody closer and helps in creating team unity.

There is no firm relationship pattern between a concrete learning process and practices and team commitment. The problem solving activity normally engages all members and tightens their relationship as explained in Research Question 1 and 2. They finally become part of a team and develop team commitment.

The qualitative data analysis demonstrates a positive relationship between leader-reinforced learning development and team commitment. Branch managers play a significant role in developing team commitment among team members. From the in-depth interviews, a common pattern of team commitment development was formed which started from the branch manager's listening skill. Finally, branch managers and team members developed a closer relationship. Branch managers gained more team commitment when they provided support or advice to team members and helped them to fix their problems.

Table 5: Post ODI Results based on Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient Test between Learning Organization Building Blocks and HPT Behaviors

Variable		Interpersonal Trust	Interactive and Open Communication	Team Commitment
Supportive Learning Environment	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	0.389* 0.023 34	0.427* 0.012 34	0.448** 0.008 34
Concrete Learning Process and Practices	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	0.634** 0.000 34	0.619** 0.000 34	0.656** 0.000 34
Leader-Reinforced Learning	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	0.662** 0.000 34	0.709** 0.000 34	0.694** 0.000 34

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Research Question 4: To What Extent is Productivity Improved after the Development of HPT Behaviors?

The productivity ratios from March to July in 2012 and 2013 were tracked and compared in order to monitor productivity ratio changes after HPT behaviors improvement. There was a consistent increase in the “Monthly Agent Activity Rate” and “Monthly Productivity per Agent” across all branches during the last five months. This means that there were improvements in both the number of active agents and the average productivity per agent after the development of HPT behaviors. This could be the result of team commitment development. Team members work harder and put extra effort into improving their team performance. They work closely with the agents in order to increase the number of active agents and productivity per agent. Finally, they increase the sale volumes and improve the Monthly Budget Hit Ratio, Monthly Production Growth Rate, and Monthly Qualified Agent Active Rate.

Table 6: Number of Branches with Higher Productivity Ratios

	Monthly Budget Hit Ratio	Monthly Production Growth Rate	Monthly Agent Activity Rate	Monthly Qualified Agent Activity Rate	Monthly Productivity per Agent Rate
No. of Branches	2	2	6	3	6
%	33.3%	33.3%	100%	50%	100%

Research Question 5: To what extent is the learning organization building blocks used as a vehicle in developing HPT behaviors?

The overall outcomes support Research Question 5. The development of learning organization building blocks led to the development of HPT behaviors. Hence, it can be concluded that the learning organization building blocks can be used as a vehicle in developing HPT behaviors.

Conclusions

Learning Organization Building Blocks

The findings showed a significant development of three core tasks of leader-reinforced learning, especially in the listening skills after the ODI. Most of the branch managers realized that paying attention to listening to their team members provided many benefits. First, they gained a higher level of interpersonal trust from the team members when they listened to team members speaking. They got a better understanding about their business operations from many perspectives. They were able to provide better guidance and advice in solving daily issues.

Second, this working atmosphere led to the development of a supportive learning environment because all members were very open to listening to each other. The environment stimulated everyone to share their ideas, experiences, thoughts, and mistakes. None of them felt embarrassed or belittled to think differently or to be a minority. Nobody was blamed for causing an unintentional mistake and team members were willing to offer their assistance to fix it.

Last, when a problem occurred in the branch, team members were not reluctant to work together in problem solving. This helped them to improve their service and performance to serve clients' demands. They categorized this kind of joint problem

solving activity as a part of the concrete learning process and practices. They gained the opportunities to exchange knowledge and experiences and learn from each other.

HPT Behavior Development

There was clear evidence in HPT behavior development. First, interpersonal trust was developed when the branch managers improved their listening skills. Team members opened their minds and stepped out from their comfort corners when branch managers listened to them. Team members developed a higher level of interpersonal trust and felt comfortable talking to the branch managers. This encouraged them to share information, experiences, and issues. They also did not hesitate to report their problems and mistakes to the branch managers and colleagues.

Second, the working environment became very friendly, and supported the learning when team members were open in accepting each other. This situation developed a higher level of interactive and open communication. Team members were active in sharing and exchanging information, data, experiences, thoughts, and comments between each other. In addition, some of them were very open in talking about their personal problems and were not reluctant at seeking advice from their colleagues. The barrier between work functions was diminished and people were able to see the connections and linkages across the functions. They started developing a tighter relationship among team members.

Finally, this closer relationship united team members to become a team. They were no longer working alone in an isolated environment. They saw the operation from a holistic viewpoint and understood the impact caused by one function to another function. It was critical for the branch managers to educate the team members about shared goals and values. When the members shared the same goals and values, they developed the last HPT behavior, team commitment.

The Relationship between Learning Organization Building Blocks and HPT Behaviors

The findings demonstrate positive relationships between building blocks and HPT behaviors. The development of each building block stimulated the HPT behavior development.

The supportive learning environment produced a positive impact on HPT behavior development under the three conditions, namely: (1) the branch managers and team members were open in accepting any unintentional mistake done committed by a team member; (2) all members accepted and recognized the differences and new ideas proposed by team members; and (3) all members were urged to share their ideas, experiences, issues, and problems in a proper forum. Nobody was embarrassed and belittled for saying something different or being a minority.

This research did not indicate any direct impact of concrete learning process and practices on HPT behavior development. It created an indirect impact through the problem-solving activity. Team members built a more interactive and open form of communication when they got together to fix the problems. They got a chance to share and exchange their experiences, initiatives, ideas, thoughts, and comments to solve the issues. The higher level of communication led to the development of interpersonal trust and team commitment.

Lastly, there was an evidence of the impact of leader-reinforced learning development on HPT behavior development. The development of branch managers' listening skill was a critical factor which led to the development of all HPT behaviors.

Recommendations

For the Participants

To institutionalize the development of learning organization building blocks and HPT behaviors in the organization, the branch managers need a longer period of ODI to practice leader-reinforced learning skill, especially listening and questioning skills. As a result, these skills would gradually become their daily practice and behavior. This is a primary step to develop the interpersonal trust between branch managers and team members.

For Further Study

While there is a distinct understanding of the relationship between the learning organization building blocks development and HPT behavior development, there is still a vague understanding about the role of concrete learning process and practices in forming HPT behavior development. Further studies should be developed to test the impact of concrete learning process and practices on HPT behavior development. That would lead

to a better understanding of the correlation between the concrete learning process and practices and HPT behavior development. As a result, the researcher would be able to fully utilize the concrete learning process and practices in developing the HPT behaviors in a systematic structure.

Limitations

There is a limitation in generalizing the findings from this research, because this research was conducted within a single company. The quantitative data collection and analysis was based on a small sample size. Therefore, full quantitative research should be considered in order to gain a deeper understanding about the relationship between the impact of learning organization building blocks development and HPT behavior development.

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