Abstract

It comes from the term E-learning, all the training activities that are done through electronic equipment are called E-learning. In the electronic world that is changing rapidly, the key to organizations and scientific environments’ motivation and determinations is knowledge. So, free, consistent and economic access to education and improvements for individuals in an organization is of priority. Therefore, organizations seek a way for challenges, opportunities and knowledge tools in educating employees. The ever increasing growth of information technology has revolutionized training methods and tools and these changes are aiming to enable any individual to learn at any self-chosen time period and at any place. E-learning is the most outstanding learning method in the current era that has attracted many organizations and scientific institutions. E-learning facilities such as ease of access to educational resources, reduce the time and cost of travel, possible access at any time (night and day) anywhere (anywhere in the world), learners choices in determining a course of education, and lack of flexibility and spending no extra time for leaving work cause dramatic changes in training individuals. This research surveys the relationship between E-learning and staff development and the two hypotheses and the predicting variable of E-learning strategic and operative) and criterion variable (inside and outside an organization) has been done in Management of National Drilling Fluids Company located in Ahwaz. Data collecting was carried out by studying books and articles and researches from others and the internet and also built questionnaire. Respondents to the questions were experts and senior technicians and management staff of fluids section. For analyzing data inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation test were used. The results of analyzing data using SPSS software and Pearson correlation coefficient reveals that there are significant relationships between the main variables of the study (E-learning) and the auxiliary variables (strategic E-learning and operative E-learning) with staff development in National Drilling Fluids Company. Therefore, the assumption of no relationship is rejected and the main hypotheses are confirmed.

Key words: E-learning, operational E-learning, strategic E-learning, staff development

1. Introduction

Wondrous changes in human lifestyle and entering the era of knowledge and information have subjected the development of human communities to using modern tools of information technology. Nowadays, it is a rare case to find someone who hasn’t happened to have used at least one of the vast numbers of information technology related tools and it probably makes good sense to measure ones level of literacy with their ability to imply information technology. In fact this era promises a world with modern way of using information. Internet and cyber space are wonderful sources of awareness and knowledge. With the fundamental changes that have been made by growth and development of modern communicative technologies taking place in different spheres of human life, education has not been an exception from this theorem. However, human resources are considered as the most valuable investment of a country in moving toward development and in information era, this huge investment needs retraining to preserve its value and harmonize itself with the increasing amount of information.
It is of no doubt that experience of some countries like Japan, which created a valuable capital only by relying on authentic education of human resources and based their Sustainable Development on its groundwork, must be surveyed. Today, there are approximately over 30 million workforce in Islamic Republic of Iran. This vast population is working in industrial, commerce and public sections to satisfy country’s needs with working in various job positions. It obviously cannot be claimed that all the mentioned individuals intrinsically have the required knowledge, awareness, technical skills and behavior to do their tasks and assigned responsibilities. But dare say that most of these employees to properly perform the duties and responsibilities of their job, or at least raise the quality or quantity of their work, they need education and development. The quick development of technology, especially ICT, has presented more perspicuous horizon and perspectives to capture pinnacles of science, technology and industry and also resolving human problems and obliges all individuals to make efforts in acquiring computer skills and their application in other sciences and more specifically education in a way that persons and communities who are incapable of using modern technologies are considered illiterate. Communicational networks have altered traditional training and interactions between trainer and trainee in all levels. What we can be assured of in global aspects of training is that the development of training is a global necessity and E-learning is one of the most important resolutions to it. Despite being very new, this type of training has influenced training all around the world (Cartwright, 2011:2).

Management and staff of National Iranian Drilling Company have taken positive steps in order to improve company activities in terms of quality and quantity with compiled and calculated planning to meet organizational and personal development through effective training and using available capabilities aligned with work force and production development.

Human resources make up the primary treasure and capital of an organization. Other assets of an organization are subject to supplying human forces and this means that prober diagnosis and application of all the capital and renewable and non-renewable resources and optimal utilization of resources in general are subject to intellectual maturity, strength and breadth of thought, and deftness of staff. As a result, we can consider training as antecedent to an organization’s development. In the current era, as technology and science are accelerating, individuals’ efficiency is depended on the training they have had before or in line with job at the time of working and otherwise will not have required efficiency to do their tasks in the organization due to complexity and extensiveness of changes. Communities have accelerated toward new changes from traditional methods and accepting those changes to an extent that has caused thought and skill gaps in many segments of the society. Today, needs change, goals modifications, adjustment of procedures, guidelines and policies’ change, dealing with bottlenecks, increase or decrease in resources and much more remind us of the fact that in order to preserve the system and its compartments we need to bear in mind training employees and adjusting their capabilities with new needs and responsibilities. According to routine changes and development of science and technology and diversity of carriers and professions and preventing resources’ destruction, training employees is of special significance and its implementation claims precise planning and studies based on training needs of employees in a way that individuals are capable of taking part in training courses rendering their limitations. E-learning has set the grounds for individuals to be trained at any time and place. Base on statistical reports in United States, 40% of training costs is spent on transportation. Just add the time people spend on this and the costs related to supply the space and equipping In Person classes to transportation costs to reveal the value creation aspects of E-learning approach. E-learning is of importance for the employees for the following reasons:

1- In different organizations, employees have to leave their workplace for taking part in various training plans and this causes serious problems for performing affairs and organizational tasks. Information technology prepares an environment for the learner to test their theories and form their knowledge in a dynamic way through interacting with different individuals and sources.

2- The promoting position of human resources in organizations and institutions and its wondrous effects on organizational performance has led to managers and experts count human resource training costs as investment and a lot of efforts has been made to make broad uses of training technology to spread trainings, increase educational training and coverage, improve training quality and speed. According to the essence of correct distribution of facilities and resources in organizational trainings, Information and Communications Technology is an effective and affordable method for organizational trainings and as a result electronic and electric facilities in training have rapidly and broadly been welcome in many developing countries has extremely decreased costs related to staff transportation, preparing necessities of implementing In Person trainings courses and covers more people in a way that Information and Communications Technology is counted as fundamental investment of distant learning especially as service
training in international environment and low cost development of human resources’ knowledge. Knowledge-based economy needs this type of training for reaching its goals and extending human resource learning and knowledge production. This method, by saving time in addition to volatility and parsimony in costs, give the information to individuals so easily and facilitates the access to experts and professionals.

What we pursue in this research is surveying the relationship between E-learning and staff development as the main question and surveying the relationship between E-learning and staff development (operative, strategic) as the secondary question.

2. Conceptual model

Variables in the form of a conceptual model and explaining how they are measured:

There are four variables as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion variable</th>
<th>Predicting variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within the organization</td>
<td>1- Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td>2- Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Thesis hypothesis

Main hypothesis:
There is a relationship between E-learning and staff development.

The secondary hypotheses:
There is a relationship between operative E-learning and staff development.
There is a relationship between strategic E-learning and staff development.

4. Methodology:

In the present study, according to its subject and purpose, the descriptive correlational method was used. The population consists of all the staff in management levels, experts and senior technicians that is 300 people. The sample consists of all the population and the sampling method is census taking. To gather the data we used 2 methods:

a) Library method: this method was used to gather the literature of the study. Books, articles, other researchers’ studies and the internet were probed in this phase.

b) Questionnaire: 300 questionnaires were distributed among the samples studied. The questionnaire is a Made questionnaire containing 53 questions.

In this study, in order to design the questionnaire and also making sure of its reliability, a first draft of the questionnaire was made using some experts’ experiences. After designing the questionnaire, the contents of it were repetitively changed. Questionnaire’s validity was calculated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient as the validity was calculated and confirmed for E-learning and staff development in order 94.4 and 82.6.

Inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation test and the coefficient of determination were used in this study.
5. Research findings

Thesis hypothesis:
There is a relationship between E-learning and staff development.
There is a relationship between operative E-learning and staff development.
There is a relationship between strategic E-learning and staff development.

Data analysis shows that Spearman and Pearson correlational coefficients between the variables of E-learning, operative E-learning and strategic E-learning with staff development are by order 0.552, 0.378, 0.538 with P-value 0.000 (significance) and smaller than significance level $\alpha = 0.05$; as a result, assuming there is no association is rejected in this level and consequently there is a significant relationship between variable E-learning, operative E-learning and strategic E-learning with staff development. Meanwhile, positive correlation coefficients and the slope of the fitted line shows that the relationship between the two variables is direct (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation test statistics of relationship between E-learning and staff development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>staff development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning</td>
<td>0.552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operative E-learning</td>
<td>0.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic E-learning</td>
<td>0.538</td>
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</tbody>
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6. Discussion

In this section we mention some definitions of the variables by experts:
Staff development: Is an aggregation of systems, procedures and actions that the organization and management use to improve and increase efficiency, productivity, motivation, quality development, performance evaluation, job satisfaction, growth, creativity, effort, and overall growth and development of organization and human force, according to the goals of the organization and its employees (Moftakhar, 1996:20).
Strategic E-learning: trainings that are more aligned with strategic goals of the organization. Strategic goals are the final aims that all the factors perform to achieve.
Operative E-learning: Implying virtual training and associating that with an organization’s aims, missions and goals is Operative E-learning; goals that organizations have to reach in order to achieve strategic goals (David, 2011:37).

Main and secondary confirmed hypotheses of the previous part are in line with former researchers’ studies that are brought in table 2 proportionate with peer hypotheses of researchers.
Table 2. Views of previous researchers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main and secondary hypotheses</th>
<th>Views of previous researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a relationship between E-learning and staff development.</td>
<td>Kashiha (2006): E-learning completes the contemporary training methods and in some cases replaces them. One of the main E-learning approaches is the Compound training meaning application of a medium in training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a relationship between strategic E-learning and staff development.</td>
<td>Peter Bentely (2001): Use of virtual learning and associating it with strategic goals (Linking organizational strategy to effectiveness and empowerment of staff, improve corporate performance, efficiency and responsiveness to the needs, optimizing supply chain performance and customer satisfaction, improved employee retention, motivating employees to greater accountability through the development of individual abilities, optimization of intellectual capital and knowledge management, updating knowledge, virtual business development, accelerating the provision of targeted training based on the needs and improve environmental conditions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a relationship between operative E-learning and staff development.</td>
<td>Peter Bentely (2001): Operative E-learning is application of Virtual Education and its relationship to the purpose, mission and goals of an organization.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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