

# TOWARD A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY LEARNING UNIVERSITY IS A KEY PREREQUISITE

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## ABSTRACT

*Changing into a Knowledge-based countries and, being able to apply an adaptive learning strategy has become imperative for the university survival. This study target at exploring the college of business school, CBA at King Saud University, using, the Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) model. The research will help in studying and examining some important issues to develop KSU into a learning university.*

*A case study triangulation method has been undertaken, documents, interviews and a survey. The Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) was distributed to a faculty member and the management as well in the CBA, followed by semi-structured interviews with the Directorate. Data analysis has been focused on the identification of the main dimensions of LO in the case.*

*This study is an attempt to build on and add to the current body of knowledge in the field of a Learning Organization by investigating and illustrating the most important dimensions that might have an impact on the learning organization as a valuable tool for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, this study will use these different factors to change Saudi Arabia toward a knowledge-based society to cope with the 2030 vision, via creating a new learning university.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge-Based Economy, Learning Organization, Learning Universities, Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ).

## INTRODUCTION

The notion of knowledge-economy “started to appear in the early 1960s. However; it becomes an increasingly popular philosophy these days. There has been much interest in this “new phenomenon”, with many studies trying to identify the concept and mechanism behind this economy in which knowledge has become essential. This transformation was a natural result of the shifts that has passed off the human socio-economic developing; The first wave was the agricultural age; since the wealth was depending on possessing the land; The second wave was the industrial age; in which the wealth was owning the capital. The third wave was the knowledge age, in which possessing of knowledge determines wealth. This growing in the importance of knowledge is stimulating the transformation of both the character of the wealthy people possessed and the nature of organizations, which has been turned topsy-turvy by a shift to knowledge-based-economy. Referred to the UK department of trade & industry (1998); the knowledge economy is defined as” one in which the knowledge generation and exploitation have come to play the predominant part in the creation of wealth”. Recently the world Bank used the term “KE” to describe an economy that creates, sharing and implementing knowledge to enhance its growth and development. Practically; Co-operation and Development (OECD,) World Bank (WB) and Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) and others have provided practical steps

to build the knowledge economy in both the developed and the developing countries. And it is showed a high acceptance that changing organization into a new style called a learning organization which is determined by many authors as the key prerequisite for the knowledge economic. (Allam & Abdalla, 2013). The most important characteristic of learning university is the ability to learn fast. King Saud University must actively respond to this new request and follow the other learning universities. The most important issue is, do KSU success in becoming a learning organization? This question will be answered through this research by using Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), to investigate the extent that King Saud University has been committed to this new style of organization. The results show high responding to many practices of the learning organization. However, few rooms need improvement. This question was the core of many studies and the answer was, as strategic responses to changing environmental conditions and pressures, many universities these days are applying new ideas and changing to new ways of operating. Yes, they have become learning organizations. (Glenys, 1999; Mead, 1995; Ozlem, 2012). Recently, universities in Saudi Arabia have been challenged in many ways, the high educational environment has become more complicated and expansion, that resulted in a larger and more heterogeneous student population, which has challenged the traditional teaching methods. Also, The growing cooperation in higher education within the European Union (EU) lead many students to compare the traditional education system with the education abroad. Based on a recent survey, had been established in 2015, in the light of the bilateral relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia, through the larger project of developing King Abdelaziz Al-Saud scholarship plan. The number of Saudi students in the United States 84,709 (The Ministry of High Education, Report, 2015). In addition to, the extensive use of information technology (IT), that has increased the qualification and the number of both the academic staff and students. As a result, Saudi universities are nowadays forced to compete in an international market, which creates a challenge situations for the Saudi Universities. On the other hand, Align with the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030-announced by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The most important characteristics of the learning organization are the ability to learn fast and to expand its capacity to create, acquire, transfer and use that knowledge by the way that is changing its behaviour to reflect this knowledge. Since universities are recognized as organizations which are dedicated to learning; they create knowledge; but are they learning organizations? As such, the application of innovative and entrepreneurial approaches in universities. In this context, many types of research suggested that universities should become learning organizations (Boyce, 2003; Mulford, 2000; Chen, 2001). That is a comprehensive one which seeks to transform the entire state into a new country that ranks high among the developed nations. Through social, humanitarian, developmental, military and performance aspects. The education will play a significant role. Since the second theme of this vision is, booming economy provides many opportunities for all, by building high education system aligned with market needs and creating new opportunities for all the entrepreneur, the small and medium business and the large organizations (Ages, 2008; Nelson, 1993). One of the consequences is that the universities in Saudi Arabia must struggle to find successful learning strategies enabling them to success in their vital role in achieving spiritual vision. This outcome is agreed with the result of many researchers that found universities ought to develop more adaptation learning strategies to be able to cope with the competitive situation. As such, the application of innovative and entrepreneurial approaches in universities. In this context, many types of research suggested that universities should become learning organizations (Boyce, 2003; Mulford, 2000; Chen, 2001). The most important characteristic of learning university is the

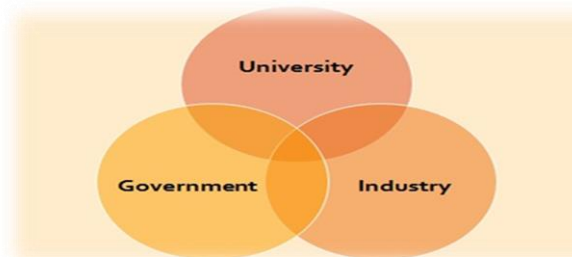
ability to learn fast. King Saud University must actively respond to this new request and follow the other learning universities. The most important issue is, do KSU success in becoming a learning organization? This question will be answered through this research by using Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), to investigate the extent that King Saud University has been committed to this new style of organization. The results show high responding to many practices of the learning organization. However, few rooms need improvement.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Knowledge-Economy

Despite the extensive studies that have been developed in the field of the knowledge economy, there is no agreement among authors about what does it mean (Smith, 2002; Drucker, 1993). For many authors, “knowledge economy” is still vague. Moreover, Smith (2002) for using the suitable economic theory to explain the knowledge economy, it depends on the explanation of the role of knowledge in the knowledge economy. Based on an invaluable study that has been developed by Duc & Katsuhiko (2009). There are many theories developed to explain the knowledge economy as; a new growth theory, evolutionary theory of economic change, triple helix theory and the knowledge gap theory,

1. The new growth theory, the central ideas of this theory are; the change of knowledge is the result of conscious economic activities, as endogenous rather than exogenous to the economy. Moreover, there are significant externalities of knowledge, the synergy of these two results will derive the knowledge to be the only source of sustainable long-term economic growth. The first and most obvious issue for educational work using multimedia applications is how to integrate them into the curriculum structure. In this scenario, Andresen et al. (2013) claim that multimedia with its multimodal resources and services can facilitate the process of progressively moving towards higher-order thinking when integrated within the existing curriculum.
2. The national innovation system (NIS) theory, the processes of creation, modification and diffusion of innovations of an economy are the results of activities and interactions of many different organizations within it making a system of innovation. In a broad definition, the innovation system includes organizations involved in searching and exploring knowledge and all parts of the economic and institutional structure.
3. The triple helix theory, the knowledge economy is a triple helix in two different layers: Functional layer and institutional layer. Three functions of a socio-economic system include first novelty production; second wealth generation and retention; third control at the interfaces of these sub-dynamics. The three most important corresponding institutions are university, industry and government as Figure 1 shows



**FIGURE 1**  
**THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY BY THE TRIPLE HELIX THEORY**

4. The knowledge-gap theory: Various knowledge-gap models have been developed, such as technology gap model, technical knowledge gap model and digital gap model. The core assumption is that lagging countries differ from leading ones mostly because the former have less knowledge than the latter. For catching-up of lagging countries, it needs certain capabilities. Based on this theory knowledge can play a significant triple role in the knowledge economy; knowledge-as-asset, knowledge-as-relation and knowledge-as-capability (Duc and Katsuhiko, 2009).
5. Knowledge-as-Asset provides the most convenient way to reconcile with orthodox economic theories. Knowledge or more accurately “knowledge in a state” is considered as input and output in the production function. However innovation-induced dynamics of the knowledge economy. Many authors (e.g. Dolfsma and Soete, 2005) have agreed that the possess of assets without activities does not guarantee a prosperous economy.
6. Knowledge-as-Relation has the advantage of suggesting an overall systemic picture of the complex structure of knowledge economy and coherence within the structure. However, many different factors cause a lack of focus in the picture.
7. Knowledge as capability, Enables a reflection of the dynamics of the knowledge economy. Many studies suggest that the concept of capability can provide a link to the three views of knowledge. Organizational capabilities comprise human capital, social capital (relationships) and organizational capital (processes, technologies and databases). The analysis of these emotional expressions can form a good indicator of their satisfaction and performance. Moreover, according to the different multimedia presentation techniques, the authors found a clear difference in the resultant emotional expressions of learners based on their gender! They stated that female students are more easily affected by different multimedia material than male learners.

## Learning Organization

The idea of learning organization surfaced in early 1990 as Senge began to explore the art and practice of the learning organization and popularized organizational learning with his book, "The Fifth Discipline" (Senge, 1990). The term learning organization is still difficult to define. Some authors found it as vagueness. As Watkins and Golembiewski (1995) noted; the learning organization is “a tentative road map, still indistinct and abstract” and they observed that it is “a never-ending journey”. Moreover, many authors defined it from a different perspective as such Senge (1990) who tried to differentiate learning organization from another organization. He defined the learning organizations as “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning to see the whole together”. He noted that the dimension that distinguishes learning from more traditional organizations is the mastery of certain basic disciplines. Agree with this viewpoint Smith (2001), who defined learning organization based on the people in this organization who may have sufficient absorptive capacity to create new patterns of thinking by which they are continually learning in a systematic manner. Nonaka (1991) also found the learning organization as a knowledge-creating organization since the sole business of this organization is the continuous learning and innovation. From different viewpoint Garvin (1993) found the learning organization must have the capability to generate, acquire and share knowledge, which affects behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights” in this context, Garvin et al. (2008) conceptualized the definition of the learning organization, to contain three dimensions; first, the supportive learning environment; the concrete learning processes and practices and the third aspect related to the leadership style and behaviour that encourage learning. In supporting this idea, many researchers suggested that an organization that can not learn, being unable to efficiently and continuously adapt, respond or predicts what change is required will be out of the game (Stewart, 1999). For more specification, Smith (2001) noted that the learning organization is characterized by high degree of employee involvement towards shared values or principles. Also, Watkins and Marsick (2003) define learning organizations that have continuous learning

process. They set seven critical dimensions to describe the learning organization; create lifelong learning opportunities; collaboration and team learning; systematic capture and share learning; empower people toward a collective vision; promote inquiry and dialogue connection and single out leaders who model and champion learning. Through these dimensions, the CBA at King Saud University will be examined towards a learning organization.

### Universities as Learning Organizations

Are the universities can be considered as learning organizations or not? this question is extensively addressed via many authors' viewpoints (Duke, 1992; Earl, 1994; Clark, 1998; Negus et al., 2008). Since the university is defined as an organization for research, learning and teaching of students. The second approach focused on the entrepreneur role of the university in performing partnership with the industry (Ottman, 1996; Clark, 1998; Michael, 1980). The third approach had been studied the managerial practices in the University (Sterwart, 1998 & Tomson 2003b). The fourth approach addressed the primary barriers to becoming learning university; their findings showed that; organizational culture, organizational structure and governmental policies are the main obstacles for the learning university (Wong & Tierney, 2001). However, there is still a shortage in addressing how universities became learning organizations (Ozlem, 2012; Ness et al., 2008; Darry & Carmel, 2006), that is why this study had been performed. It targets at educating elite groups of intellectually skilled people dubbed as "professions" who will be able to lead the entire society and improving the civilizations as well (Saul, 1999). Many authors as Weathersby and White (2004) are positively answered this question and found becoming the university as a learning organization is critical for higher education's wellbeing. In the same manner, many authors advocated that the university is a learning organization in which all the faculties learn and use their knowledge to advance both the students and their societies as well (Gaita, 1997; McClenagh, 1998; Ramsden, 1998). Based on the dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation that had been developed by Nonaka (1998), new knowledge is created through two dimensions; the epistemological dimension where knowledge creation is recognized as the conversion process between the two popular types of knowledge (tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge) and the ontological dimension where knowledge is created only by individuals. Since an organization cannot create knowledge without individuals, therefore the role of the organization just support the creative people and provide a context for such individual to create knowledge. So the University itself can be considered as a key (Ba) for the learning process. In the same manner, Senge (1990) described the university as a learning organization where people learn how to learn. However, many empirical studies in this area had been applied, most of them were targeted at a profit-organizations while there is little attention had been undertaken towards studying this phenomenon for the non-profit organizations (Senge, 1990; Kim, 1994; Flood, 2000; El-Shafie, 2009; Roth, 2009). Specifically, few studies had been developed for studying the university as a learning organization. Four distinctive approaches have been found in the literature; the first approach examined the university as part of business, the authors viewed at the University as corporate units (Schwarz, 2001 & Healy, 1998).

Three limitations are arising from the research context. First, the data analysis methods used in this study do not allow us to evaluate the quality of the research reported. It should be recognized, therefore, that the papers included in our pool are of mixed quality. For instance, our reporting on the adoption of latest digital tools does not necessarily inspect whether the researchers used the tools correctly, rigorously or even uniformly.

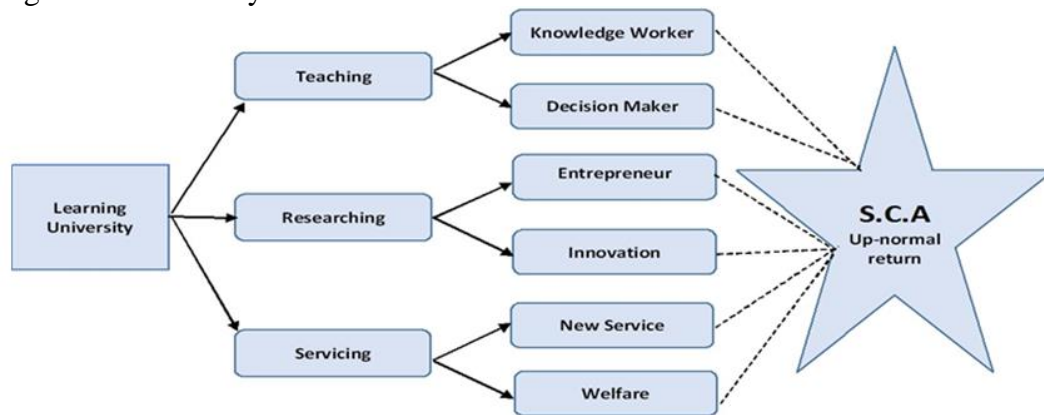
Second, while our data reflect some of the content of the papers analysed, they do not reflect a full evaluation of the contents of the papers. Third, while non-English native speakers author papers in English, the choice to exclude papers written in languages other than English may have limited the size and diversity of the sample.

### **Learning University and the Knowledge-Based-Economy**

The relation between the learning university and the knowledge based-economy can be addressed by the concept of the Sustainable Competitive Advantages (SCA). The actual term "SCA" first coined by Day (1984), who defined it as the organization's ability to maintain consistently and earn a return on investments above the average for its industry (Porter, 1985). For Barney (1991) "a firm is said to have an SCA when it is implementing a value creating a strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these others firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this approach". Invaluable contributions have been offered in different fields to explore the sources of SCA. (Elshafie, 2009; Karlkapp, 1999; Nakpodia, 2009). Barney (1991) noted that not all a firm's resources hold the potential to be SCA; they must possess four specific attributes; rareness, value, inability to be imitated and failure to be substituted. Prahalad and Hamel (1990) developed the notion of core competencies. They claimed that firms should combine their resources and skills into core competencies in which a firm does distinctively well about competitors. When we write with text, we reduce the effective domain element of the learning environment, serving, in some ways, to neutralize the impact of our cultural norms. Being mindful of this potential disconnect has allowed careful to translate energetic tendencies into something that is more culturally neutral, by contextualizing them as enthusiasm for the topic at hand.

Invaluable empirical studies had been performed for studying this important issue. They concluded that; the intangible resources would be better suited than the physical ones to achieve SCA. Spender (1996) suggested that an organization's ability to generate new knowledge is the key to building SCA and Wiig (1997) mentioned that to be competitive and successful enterprises, it must create and sustain a balanced intellectual capital portfolio. While others found transferring knowledge within the firm is a base for SCA (Argot & Ingram, 2000). Zack et al. (2009) postulated that SCA resulted from the strategic use of resources and capabilities, of which knowledge is believed to be the most significant. Agreed with this Nielsen (2006) suggested that knowledge integration and coordination capabilities are the sources of competitive advantages. Kapp (1999) argued that the learning organizations generate knowledge and learning faster than competitors and turn knowledge into strategic advantages. He added, such organizations that succeeded in being learning organization remain more profitable than rivals and thus survive longer than they can do. Based on the previous studies, we can confirm that learning organizations are capable of creating the SCA rather than other agencies. In 1997 a report titled "Higher Education in the Learning Society" from the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. A committee advise the UK government on the future development of higher education gives emphasis to this notion of a universal lifelong regard for the role of learning and knowledge in a changing world. (UK Report,1997). Famous model of the learning university is the University of Phoenix as for-profit-provider of high education in the USA and the enter rentier University as the Warwick & Strathclyde Universities (Schwarz, 2001). Additionally, based on the national innovation system (NIS) theory. Building the knowledge economy is the synergy of the collaboration of three key institutions; one of them is the

universities. Figure 2 simply clarify the relation between the learning university and the knowledge based-economy.



**FIGURE 2**  
**LEARNING UNIVERSITY AND THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED-ECONOMY**

In this context, we can argue that the learning university has an essential role in building the knowledge-based economy through the following:

1. The output of the learning university is the primary source of all intangible assets and intellectual capital in any country. The so-called knowledge-society; regarding; education, qualifications; medical doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers and other work related knowledge, competencies, know-how, Innovation capacity, creativity, experience, employee flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, motivation, learning ability,...etc. That can mostly cover the knowledge gap and help in catching the leading countries (Bui, 2012).
2. An essential role of the university is the social responsibility and servicing the community that can play a critical role in changing the society to the best and protect the minority. As an example, the efforts of many universities in disease surveillance for HPAI causing the swan flu) by laboratory capability and capacity, containment of the out break and vaccination. The learning university can play an essential role in changing the society culture, via more focusing on the positive attitude, values, norms and behaviours toward building learning, sharing and doing a culture.
3. One of the most important responsibilities of learning university is covering the knowing-doing gap since the SCA resides in the application of the knowledge rather than in the knowledge itself. The learning university by encouraging the implementation of the MBA, Masters and Ph.D. projects. The efficient use of such knowledge will create value and positively support in changing knowledge into action that affects the development of new goods and services.
4. The learning university, by participating in the industry and the government, via this synergy. We hope that societies have provided a creative and inspiring atmosphere that allowing new ideas to arise and good practices to be exchanged that support in building the innovation and novelty system which determined as the base of generating future cash flows and the wealth retention for any country, that achieve SCA for the economy.

### Review of Learning Organization Characteristics

Learning organization has extensively been investigated through literature. The following table (Table 1) summarizes some of the characteristics of the Learning Organization scales on the literature review.

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>LEARNING ORGANIZATION CHARACTERISTICS</b>	
<b>Authors</b>	<b>Learning Organization Characters</b>
GOH 2003	Clarity of mission and vision
	Leadership commitment and empowerment
	Experimentation and rewards
	Effective transfer of knowledge
	Teamwork and group problem solving
Garvin 2000	Systematic problem solving
	Learning from experience
	Learning from others
	Transferring knowledge
LIN 2008	Managerial commitment
	Systems orientation
	Knowledge acquisition
	Knowledge dissemination
Chiva et al., 2007	Experimentation
	Risk Taking & Dialogue
	Interaction with the external environment
	Participative decision making
Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005	Managerial commitment
	Systems perspective
	Openness and experimentation

Despite the extensive research on the concept and the application of learning organization. Many authors find the idea of LO is still vague (Burgoyne, 1997; Garvin, 2000; Jacobs, 1995; Hodgkinson, 2000). On the other hand, many of the models that have been developed for the LO have been criticized. As an example, The model that has been formulated in the Fifth Discipline by Peter (1990); describes the learning organization through his famous model; systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models and the shared vision have been criticized by Anders (2007), for misunderstood and leaving too many questions unanswered. Also, Garvin's (1993) developed his model that provides a comprehensive explanation of three types of organizational learning using the cognitive perspective: Gathering intelligence, learning from experience and providing opportunities for experimentation. Also, has been criticized for making recommendations that are too abstract. Since he did not provide guidance or a framework for action (Senge, 1999; Knight, 2006). None of these models had an instrument designed to help practitioner measure the extent that organization success as a learning organization. Since there is an urgent need for a theoretical and a standard framework, for that reason Watkins and Marsick (1998), proposed the Dimension of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). As they noted, the learning occurs at four interdependent levels-individual, team, organization and society. They define six actions as imperatives for the learning organization and the seventh action imperative (providing strategic



leadership or learning) was added in a later work (Watkins & Marsick, 1996). The (DLOQ) has been chosen for this research for many reasons; first, it was specifically designed as a “diagnostic tool to measure changes in organizational learning practices and culture”. Second; it is the most comprehensive questionnaire (contains seven dimensions with 55 measurable statements towards learning organization (Marsick & Watkins, 2004). Third, the specificity of this approach lies in the expertise of the founders as adult educators who are interested in learning and organizational change. Fourth, all the dimensions of this model have been extensively validated as a research tool by many authors and all of them confirm the construct validity of using the DLOQ in a different context (Garvin, 2000; Gilley, 2000). Through the (DLOQ), CBA at King Saud University will be examined towards a learning organization. As Table 2 shows.

<b>Table 2</b> <b>WHAT COULD DRIVE KING SAUD UNIVERSITY AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION</b>	
<b>The Dimension</b>	<b>Likely to Become a Learning Organization</b>
Continuous learning	It means the learning becomes an everyday part of the job in the organization and, it is built into routine tasks. The Employees are expected to learn not only skills relating to their works but also the skills of others in their work unit.
Dialogue and Inquiry	It is relating to ‘a particular variety of organizational culture that enables and encourages people to create, share and implement knowledge for the benefit and enduring success of the organization.’’
Collaboration and Team Learning	It means that the work environment promotes and encourages the synergy of learning; a group of people cannot become a team unless everybody has the willing to act as a part of a team.
Establish system to capture and share learning (embedded system)	It highlights the importance of seeing the organization as a whole system and its objectives where parts are considered within an integrated whole.
Empower people toward a collective vision	It relates to how people are involved in setting, owning and implementing a collective vision.
Connect the organization to its Community and Environment	It requires organizations to play a significant role in its community.
Providing Strategic Leadership for Learning	It focuses on Leaders model, champion and support learning, which is why leadership uses learning strategically for business results.
Developed by Author based on the (DLOQ)	

## RESEARCH DESIGN & DATA GATHERING

### King Saud University Contributions to the Research Field

This paper utilizes a case-study triangulation method, the Survey of the case study is the appropriate method to use. The interview to insist the result had been undertaken and also being a member of the Quality and Accreditation Committee in the management department provides the author a chance for investigating documents through which many practices of learning organizations had been discovered. King Saud University is a premier institution of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is a comprehensive research-oriented university located in Riyadh; KSU is comprised of 23 colleges, including the College of Business Administration (CBA). KSU embarked on a strategic transformation process based on its 2030 vision “to be a world-class university and a leader in developing Saudi Arabia’s knowledge

society”. Its mission is “to provide students with a quality education, conduct valuable research, serve the national and international communities and contribute to Saudi Arabia’s knowledge society through learning, creativity and efficient global partnership” (KSU; SSR, 2015). The establishment and development of KSU reflect both the development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the broader goals and directions of higher education system toward a knowledge-based-country. In 2012, KSU was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the Arab world, 64<sup>th</sup> in Asia and 420<sup>th</sup> globally according to Web metrics and 261<sup>st</sup> on the Shanghai Jiao Tong ranking.

### **College of Business Administration (CBA)**

The CBA is one of the pioneer colleges of KSU, being established as the College of Commerce in 1959. CBA has become one of the top colleges of KSU. During the five decades of its prominence, the CBA has graduated many managers, entrepreneurs, business professionals and leaders and its graduates' progress has been seen to prestigious appointments in Saudi Arabia and other countries. It was given its current name in 2006. The CBA is importing knowledge and skills to students that are required and preferred by potential employers and other stakeholders. It offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs to students who are of top caliber with excellent academic preparations in their school educations. The CBA has nine departments, namely Accounting, Economics, Finance, Health Administration, Management, Management Information Systems, Marketing, Quantitative Analysis and Public Administration. Moreover, it offers a total of 15 programs, all of them are included in the scope of AACSB initial accreditation. The CBA has developed a strategic plan (2011-2016) at the college level that is very much parallel to vision 2030 and the mission of the University. Such strategic plan has made remarkable changes in learning university. It is a public institution founded in 1957. It has been regarded as one of the top institutions of higher education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region in the Middle East.

### **Data Gathering**

Gathering data were developed through three crucial phases; The Documents, this research began with an extended investigation into the main documents in the CBA, to address the managerial practices of the CBA towards the learning organization. The documents were selected based on its relevance of the theoretical model to the learning organization. As an example; the strategic plan of KSU and CBA. The Self-Study Report (SER) of CBA, this report was vital and added a lot to the study since it contains valuable information relating to; the internal processes, using the system thinking, the ability to learn from experience and the problem-solving process,...etc. The second phase of the case study included semi-structured interviews (twenty in-depth interviews) included two as a representative in each department in the CBA. They are including Vice Dean in the female section, Quality & Accreditation Committee members, Key staff persons in different departments in both the male and female sections. Questions in the interviews explored the two key areas indicated above, i.e., awareness of the company's aspiration to be a learning organization and the faculty member's understanding of that concept and their perception of the development of a learning culture in the organization. The interview was in line with the findings of the initial questionnaire. The qualitative element provided richer insight into the divergent findings of First phase (Documentation). The follow-up interviews helped to clarify and explain the findings using both critical incidents and individual observations. The use of many lines of inquiry in this study eliminates what Van Maanen (1979)

refers to as losing touch between the concept and the measure through the Triangle emphasis on both discovery and justification (Curral & Towler, 2003). The Third phase is the survey based on (DLOQ) by a random sample of staff, supplemented by interviews, to explore how the faculty member, staff and other people perceived the reality of the learning in the CBA. Approximately 100 employees, would be sufficient to provide data for the research via the questionnaires. In addition to 20 employees for the interview, were selected across the CBA, based on the criterion developed by the researchers, that they should represent all levels of the CBA (Administrative, Dean, vice dean, staff and key people). Those selected completed the questionnaires anonymously and the interviews were conducted on a confidential basis and under the control of the researcher. To assess the extent to what a CBA meets certain criteria as a learning organization. A questionnaire based on what Watkins and Marsick (1996 & 2003) had performed. The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), has been chosen for two reasons; first, it was specifically designed as a “diagnostic tool to measure changes in organizational learning practices and culture” as perceived by the employees (Marsick and Watkins, 2003). Second, it extensively had been validated as a research tool (Yang, 2003; Garvin, 2000; Templeton et al., 2002). The definitions of the seven action imperatives as they termed, which are also the constructs for the DLOQ, are shown in Table I. For the seven dimensions. A questionnaire based on the (DLOQ) was distributed to the selected samples (members of each department that are directly linked to the department). The demographics of the respondents varied between ages 23 to 56 and between long-term staff and newly appointed staff (one to more than 10 years). The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section explored the demographics of the respondents and their experience in the department. The second section was divided into seven lines of inquiry with statements based on the (DLOQ) elements of organizational learning the questionnaire was sent to the respondents by the KSU regular email.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are organized according to the characteristics of learning organizations by (DLOQ) as follow.

### **The First Dimension (DLOQ): Continuous Learning Opportunity**

In today's workplace, learning must become an everyday part of the job; it must build into the routine tasks. Employees are expected to learn not only the traditional channel of learning called the formal education or even the skills relating to their jobs. However, also, they need to learn the skills of others in their work unit and to find out how their work unit refers to the operation and goals of the business; employees are supposed to teach, as well as to learn from, their co-workers. In short, the entire work environment is geared towards and supports the learning of new skills. In this context, the learning university must motivate the faculty for the continuous learning opportunity. KSU today is looking for reliable people with throughout transferable skills. Thus It creates the environment that supports, enables, encourages and celebrates learning. There is an extensive transformation towards the lifelong learning for participating in the development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The CBA is dedicated to continuous improvement of its academic programs; student-centered learning; building strategic partners with leading organizations, leading business schools and scholarly academic and the use

of instructional technology. CBA meets the ever-growing needs for a qualified workforce in Saudi businesses, public sectors and other non-profit organizations. KSU through the Dean of Skills Development provide the faculty member with the training system (in & out), as a holistic approach for the Academy of Lifelong Learning through the following:

**Training Courses:** A system that provides applicants with training sessions and workshops by the faculty, who can investigate the status of the request and follow-up the development in all stages. Such as: Effective classroom management, achieving course learning objectives; innovative teaching and learning methods; involving technology in education; using Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as SMART boards,...etc.

**Conference Attendance:** A system that allows a faculty to fill out the forms required to attend a conference outside/inside the Kingdom and obtain the necessary documents.

**Support Unit for Demonstrators, Lecturers & Scholars:** A program that aims to clarify and define the necessary requirements to accept teaching assistants and professors at KSU.

**Rewards excellence.** A system that checks the procedures specifying and allocating rewards for excellent faculty members automatically and in a comfortable and friendly manner.

**ISI Web of Knowledge.** A range of publications and intellectual contribution developed by the research centers in various specializations, in line with the scientific and academic goals, to publish the latest research and studies and the conclusions they reached (Digital Library). Funding also is available for any staff member since all these resources are 100% free. Not only for the staff but the student and employees as well.

Moreover, most of them founded themselves are given time to support learning (95% strongly agree) as the same manner, 87% strongly agree that they are rewarded for learning. We can conclude that CBA pursues the implementation of its strategic initiatives that target at improving its academic and extra-curricular endeavors and providing its students, faculty and staff with best opportunities to grow professionally and personally. This result is supported by the result of the interview since most of the interviewees rank lifelong learning as high on the CBA agenda. One respondent said that “we are encouraged to learn 24h/day” this result lead to KSU as a learning organization.

### **The Second Dimention (DLOQ): Dialogue and Inquiry**

Part of the learning organization culture is the ability of people to high communicate in small and large groups. New knowledge and learning take place through “Dialogue”. People can perform a real dialogue if they gain productive reasoning skills and face to face interpersonal skills to express themselves. Via a strong dialogue, no one tries to win, but everyone plays with one another. As the same manner, an inquiry is based on open-minded people who judgments in the interests of truth for a better solution. The inquiry is a tool for people to explore ideas, questions and potential actions. In a learning organization, people gain productive reasoning skills to express their views and the capacity to listen and inquire into the opinion of others; the culture of the learning organization play a vital role in supporting questioning, feedback and experimentation (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Thus any organization to act as a learning

organization it must encourage questioning, feedback and testing. KSU promotes dialogue and inquiry through some tools as such; the Query Transactions; the system that allows all the employees of the university to have access to all the events in various departments and administrative units in a straightforward and accessible manner. Moreover, Forms Builder; a system that allows employees of the university to create forms and questionnaires, that can be used in various fields and can get results in an easy way.

The result of the survey shows that the overall picture slightly negatively changed Under this dimension; in regards to the statement that “faculty gives open and honest feedback to each other”, to which 75 percent were in “disagreement”. Also, the respondents did not consider themselves to be highly sharing their individual knowledge, the discussion of the statement of “whenever faculty states their view, they also ask what others think”. The results seemed to contribute negatively to the process of sharing learning (80% disagree). Similarly, most of the respondents found themselves do not spend time in building trust with each other (73% disagree). Many faculties found a hard problem in sharing their knowledge and these results agree with Ozlem, (2012) who confirm that the truth is the main barriers to learning sharing. As a trail to justify this conclusion, one interview regarding this result to the lack of freedom of expression or inquiry and other said that “We do not have the dialogue discipline; since we do not have active listening judgmental”. One stated that “We do not open the door for learning and some of us quickly down the inquiry and don’t hold the space for differences since most of us speak from no awareness”. On the same manner, one of the respondents said that “We had a Ruthless problem in sharing our knowledge” and added that “We miss the face-to-face interaction skills”. The author found it is a culture problem since Saudi Arabia like many other Arab countries, in which people are used to keeping their knowledge apart from other, they do not have the willing to share their knowledge. Moreover, this result is highly supported by many other authors who find the learning culture can be seen as a double-edged. weapon (Carla & Cindy, 2011). This result is showing the negative contribution to the Learning organization at KSU.

### **The Third Dimention (DLOQ): Team Learning and Collaboration**

It means that the work environment must promote and encourage the synergy of learning; a group of people cannot become a team unless everybody has the willing to act as a part of a team. Through the group, people must think together and discover insights or knowledge that they cannot achieve individually. The learning organization must encourage people to think together as a team or a group. That means it must help them to think about (We) instead of (I). And assist them to apply the collectivism instead of individualism approach, only by these ways, people can discover many insights and knowledge that they cannot achieve individually and for sure the synergy will be maximized since 1+1 will be more than two. In the CBA, the team learning and collaboration also hadn't seen as central to human resources in the CBA, despite the vision that was designed to be vital in encouraging policies for a collaboration working environment, the idea of the group -driven and the partnership seems to be unpinned in the KSU environment.

One interviewee said that “We have a lack of the trust to collaboration”. Other respondents stated that “We are working in the divisive environment”. The statement “ the teams or groups got the freedom to adapt their goals as needed “is used as a trial to evaluate the team learning within the CBA. However, it achieved a higher percentage of strong disagreement (98%). Also, “Team learning” in the questionnaire was explored with the following statement:

“groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or collected information”. This led to the highest disagreement with 82 percent. Additionally, there is a high percent of the respondents refuse the idea of the “teams are confident that the university will act as their recommendations (70% disagree). The survey result showed agreed with the myth of the management team Senge thoughts who noticed that “Most teams operate below the level of the lowest IQ in the group. The result is “skilled incompetence” (Seng, 17-26). The author may regard this result to the culture and subculture problem. Since KSU has many faculties from different countries; we may locate the Egyptian, Syrian, Indian, Moroccan or Sudanese in addition to the Saudi, each is also coming from various regions, so it is so difficult to build a shared culture.

### **The Fourth Dimension (DLOQ): Embedded Systems**

It highlights the importance of seeing the organization and its objectives as a whole system That insists the university to acting through an entire system and a very active feedback and closing the loop is highly required. This idea is extensively developed in CBA through the Institutional Effectiveness System (INSEFF) that is assessing the quality of the college upon using 24 different tools lately. The primary aim of INSEFF is to assure that plans are developed by institutional priorities, an annual systematic collection of data, analysis and dissemination of such information in the form of reports and action plans. As the first step of the System involves assessment of several areas of academic and administrative units such as Curriculum, faculty performance, learning resources, administrative set-up, graduation and employment rates, students' academic performance, alumniand employer feedback. Secondly, the data collected from areas of academics, administrationand other support services are analyzed, interpreted and disseminated to departments concerned for their review, evaluation and development of action plans. The departments/offices receiving the pertaining data are Academic Departments, Administrative units, program review committee and Dean's office. The third step; is the discussion and providing the recommendation that the departments mentioned above develop, based on the reports and forward to the decision-making bodies for approval. The fourth step is that the recommendations of these departments/offices are forwarded to the College Council for discussion, approval and updating in the Policy and Procedures Manual for references in the future course of action. The fifth step is that the approved changes are implemented by various departments namely academics, learning resources, academic advising, administration and registration.

Moreover, the sixth step is that changes or adjustment and corrective actions are monitored and any feedback after implementation is used for re-assessing the areas. Thus, the cyclical process of institutional effectiveness system is completed and enhancement of educational quality is achieved. The INSEFF system is intending to use 24 different mechanisms to assess the overall efficiency of CBA that are found to be promising tools for continuous improvement.

### **The Fifth Dimension (DLOQ): Empower People Toward a Collective Vision**

Nowadays all organizations have a vision statement, contains long-term objective, strategic goals, values statement...etc. However, in many cases, it looks like a beautiful picture on the wall because it is just coming down from the above. Learning organization must empower people toward a collective vision. KSU had been selected to exploring the characteristics of LO

for many reasons. The most important reason is that KSU has formally set down in its vision the aim of becoming “A learning university. Moreover, the CBA vision is *“To be a leader in business education and research that contributes to building a knowledge-based economy”*. For Empower people toward a collective vision, they must be encouraged to share and participate in drawing that vision actively, that will lead to well act towards achieving that vision, resulting from the increasing of clarity, enthusiasm and the most important thing is the commitment.

The INSEFF is real evidence that KSU is acting as a whole system and this result is highly supported by the product of the interview with the key staff who found the CBA acting as a system oriented. Most of the staff agree with the idea that the CBA “creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance (80% strongly agree ). Moreover, 78% agree that the CBA make more effort to let “its lessons learned available to all employees” by the website. Most of the staff strongly agree that the CBA, “measures the results of the time and resources spent on training” (93% strongly agree ). Such conclusion positively supports the idea of a learning organization.

In KSU, the development of the vision can be recognized as a process. The Academic Development, Quality & Accreditation (ADQ&A) Committee and the Assessments Committee in the Department were concerned with the evaluation of (mission and objectives) process. The members of these committees reviewed the mission, goals and objectives of the program, program specification, the annual program reports and the activities of both the program and the institution. They conducted interviews with faculty members and other staff in the department to understand various processes as a measure of evaluating the mission appropriateness; there were meetings held with members of other committees, i.e., Faculty Affairs Committee, Student Affairs Committee, Scientific Committee...etc. The members of the department council oversee the whole process for the preparation of this standard. The members of the Assessments Committee and (ADQ&A) Committee conducted surveys to find out the *“Overall effectiveness of the program mission statement”* from the perspectives of the current student body. In response to the concern raised by NCAA on its review report, a total of 200 students both male and female have been surveyed and the results show the overall ranking four stars out of five. Also most respondents support the idea of their empowering toward the vision in the CBA. Since 84% of them strongly agree that the CBA recognizes people for taking initiatives toward applying the vision. Moreover, also, they agree that the CBA “gives faculty control over the resources they need to accomplish their work” (91% agree). In addition to, most of them 75% support the idea (agree) that the CBA “support the faculty who take calculated risks”.

### **The Sixth Dimension (DLOQ): The Systems Connections to the Environment**

Learning organization must connect to its community and environment through what so-called social responsibility. Located KSU in the heart of the Saudi Arabia, it offers the best conditions for successful research and teaching. In addition to the international rankings confirm the KSU’s leading role in Saudi Arabia. Social responsibility continues to be at the core of KSU activities as some examples are shown in Table 3.

<b>Table 3</b> <b>THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF KING SAUD UNIVERSITY</b>
1. King Saud University's Social Responsibility Club, under the sponsorship of Saudi Arabia's Disabled Children's Association (DCA), has published a guidebook of charitable organizations to link these associations and potential donors.
2. KSU's Social Responsibility Club recently celebrated the International Day of Older Persons, a tradition established by the United Nations in 1990 to recognize the contributions of the elderly and examine issues that affect their lives. It is held annually on October and this year's theme was "Longevity: Shaping the Future."
3. King Saud University, in cooperation with the National Anti-Corruption Commission, has organized the first Arabic language anti-corruption training course. The course, "The Culture of Integrity and Anti-Corruption" is sponsored by the Saudi Investment Bank to "protect the integrity and fight corruption." More than 500 KSU students have already attended the course
4. The KSU student through the nurse club continues its efforts to spread its culture of service via voluntary programs and cultural activities. The Club is guided in this endeavour under the supervision of the deanship of the student affairs .
5. KU support dental awareness in all Ghat. KSU participated in an outreach program late last month for school students organized by the Al-Rahmaniah Cultural Centre in Al-Ghat and the Saudi Dental Society.

An interesting finding toward the learning university that the CBA support the faculty to connect with their community. 96% strongly agree that the CBA encourages faculty to think from a global perspective.

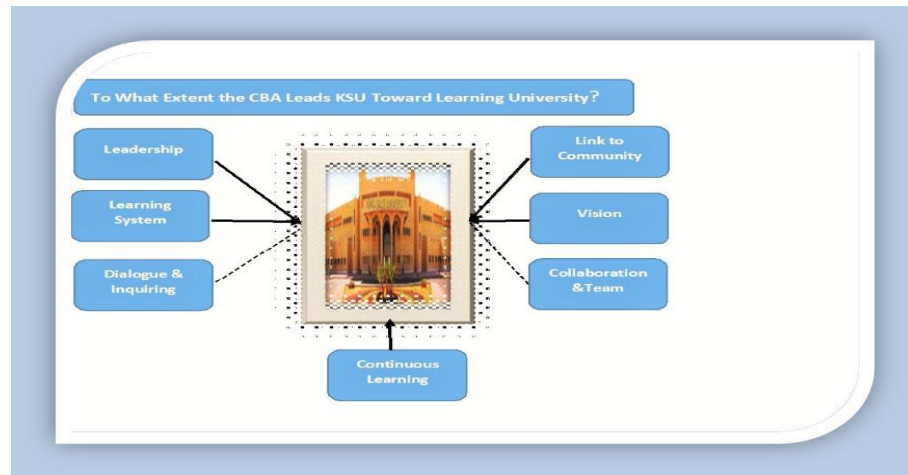
### **The Seventh Dimension (DLOQ): Providing Strategic Leadership for Learning**

It focuses on Leaders model, champion and support learning, that is why leadership uses learning strategically for business results. One evident for the supportive leadership in the CBA is President Badran Al-Omar is providing best practice in strategic leadership for learning. He seems to be democratic, consultative and strategic. His target is the top and also he is sharp, dynamic focused and able to articulate clear instructions. The leadership style in the CBA is serving CBA particularly well. It has given CBA both a clear strategic leadership and acted to ensure that the guidance was followed, acted upon and achieved. One example of the success of the leader direction is that the programs at the CBA were delivered in an Arabic medium until 2008. At the beginning of the academic year 2008-2009, under the leader directions all the CBA programs have been changed and delivered in an English medium, except few masters programs. This initiative was the transformational leader outcome. It is argued that the current leadership style of the CBA is likely to lead KSU to become LO. Another evident is that the CBA currently, got the AACSB as part of accomplishing the CBA's result of accelerating in academic leadership. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) that was established in 1916. This accreditation is awarded based on 21 standards, most of them for a learning organization. The accreditation of AACSB is made at the institutional level. Moreover, it is awarded to less than 10% of business schools worldwide. The survey shows that the majority of the respondents strongly support the strategic leadership in the CBA. Since 98% strongly agree of the respondents found that the CBA leaders mentor and coach what they lead. Moreover, 94% agree with the idea that the leaders in the CBA are continually looking for opportunities to learn. Also, the majority of the respondents strongly agree that the leaders in the CBA, ensure that the CBA's actions are consistent with its values (84%).



## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the result, we can argue that the CBA is driving KSU acting as a learning university to a great extent. Five out of seven dimensions of the (DLOQ) is strongly supportive and lead KSU to be learning university. While only two dimensions slightly result in the learning university (Dialogue and inquiry) and (Team Learning and Collaboration) as a Figure 3 shows.



**FIGURE 3**  
**KSU TOWARDS A LEARNING UNIVERSITY**

Some implications and recommendations would be addressed to help KSU and another university towards a learning university.

### Continuous Learning Opportunity for Learning University

All the respondents supported that they have many opportunities to learn, internally and abroad. Based on the documentation, the CBA provides its members with great opportunities to grow professionally and personally. For maintaining the continuous learning; learning by applying the knowledge into a new scenario and gaining contextual learning from that application. Furthermore, furthermore, since there is no learning without mistakes, learning from knowledge application must include post-analysis and critical evaluation.

### Dialogue & Inquiry Culture for Learning University

Most respondents found a lack of freedom of expression which negatively supports the learning university. Consequently; a fundamental managerial role of the CBA should foster the underlying culture that supported the establishment new knowledge through creating the chances for the dialogues and questions. Many actions must be undertaken; Different channels (formal & informal) must be opened to the debates, critical thinking and critique, which are important in fostering learning. Also, the social context must be created through the values, beliefs and behaviours that create shared individual interpretation and increased the effectiveness of learning the culture.

## **Collaboration and Team Learning for Learning University**

The idea of the group-driven and the partnership seems to be unpinned in the CBA, some responses found themselves working in the divisive environment and there is a lack of the trust among them to collaborate which will be less support. The team learning and collaboration can be built in the CBA through building a team of the suitable experienced, qualified persons who have the willingness to participate in the group. Also, the soft HRM should focus on attracting, training and develop the knowledge people to work as a team.

## **Embedded System for Learning University**

Since 2010, the CBA has adopted a system called Institutional Effectiveness System (INSEFF) to evaluate its performance, learning from mistakes and experiences. The primary aim of INSEFF is to assure that plans are developed by institutional priorities, an annual systematic collection of data and analysis and dissemination of such data, information and knowledge in the form of reports, best practices, experiences and action plans. Such INSEFF is highly leading KSU toward Learning organization. However for maintaining the embedded system; the result of any evaluation process regarding changes, adjustment and any correction actions must be disseminating and sharing the various parts in the CBA. Moreover, the feedback after implementation is vital for future re-assessing.

## **Vision for Learning University**

The vision of the CBA is widely known, shared and acted upon all the respondents, faculty members, administration, general staff or even the students. All the interviewees not only recite the CBA vision on the wall of their rooms but also applying it to their role and working environment. It is evident that the CBA vision is the one that is more likely to lead the KSU to become a learning organization. However many initiatives must be undertaken for maintenance; the ongoing assessment process to ensure that the current vision is in line with that objective and the vision of KSU. Also, ensure that the vision is regularly updated and re-crafted by all the staff.

## **Communication System for Learning University**

The faculty members have published 605 articles during the last five years in 201 peer-reviewed journals. Also, the industry service, through the applied research, which dedicated around 20% of the faculty time. It is the fact that the CBA is playing a role in differentiating KSU through educating, training and developing outstanding graduates to become first-class thinkers, problem solvers and mature citizens who can engage in the society. Therefore, we can argue that the linking with the community is playing a vital role that likely leads the KSU to be LO. For maintaining this success; The role of the CBA in the society must be clearly defined and linked to the KSU vision and also must be aligned with the Saudi Arabia 2030 vision. The results indicate that the CBA strongly linkage to the community, through the outstanding graduates, who can act appropriately and positively with the market demand. Also, the research was extensively performed in the CBA.

## Leadership for Learning University

The leadership style in the CBA is serving CBA particularly well. We can argue that the current leadership style of the CBA is likely to lead KSU to Learning organization. For maintaining, many initiatives must be followed; Develop and implement formal and informal programs to identify, develop and monitor potential leadership talent of all the staff. Moreover, all the current leaders must engage in an after action review to determine their suitability as a leader and if it proves they are unfit, they will accept that finding & voluntarily move aside to another position within the university.

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