

# A Study of University Culture Construction Based on Learning Organization Theory

Chao Jin<sup>+</sup>

School of Humanities, Economics and Law, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China

**Abstract:** Establishing learning organization has been a direction of future organization development, ever since Peter Senge put forward the learning organization theory. Learning organization provides a new perspective for university revolution. There's no doubt that learning-based university is a trend of future university development. However, to construct learning-based universities can't live alone without building learning-based cultures in the universities. Fostering learning based college culture including spiritual culture, institutional culture, behavioral culture, and material culture is supposed to facilitate the sustainable and all-round development of universities and nurture future top universities.

**Keywords:** University Culture; Learning Organization; Learning-Based University Culture

## 1. Introduction

University Culture Construction is the inherent regularity of constructing a first-class university, the premise of a university's sustainable development, an effective way to enhance university soft strength and the place where university core competence locates. A first-class university must possess first-class university culture which is the soul and spiritual support of the university itself. It has been a outstanding issue to establish advanced and creative university culture for further development among contemporary Chinese universities, especially the high-level universities. Since professor Peter. M. Senge in Massachusetts institute of technology put forward the learning organization theory in 1990s, the learning organization administration concept has been gradually globally fashionable and widely applied to various fields. As the root, propagating source and application institute of knowledge, the desire to become a learning organization for a university is increasingly urgent. Therefore, to establish learning-based university culture is the inherent demand and primary task.

## 2. The Connotation of Learning-Based University Culture

Learning-based university culture is a kind of organization culture to bring the learning organization theory into the process of university culture development and promote university sustainable development. Learning-based university culture is the creation and sublimation of university culture, it is built upon university culture, takes learning organization theory as its basic kernel, encourage and promote knowledge sharing and creation and summation of university material culture, system culture, behavior culture and spiritual culture. It has all the culture characteristics of learning organization, that is, systematic thinking methodology and the concept of lifelong learning. Generally speaking, the connotation of learning-based university culture can be defined as: systematic thinking is the core, stress the two key points of self-surpassing spirit of "university people" and improve mental models, emphasize team learning, take the common willingness as motivation, and thus form a long-existing and sustainable developing value standard and spiritual power, enable university to be full of creation, have the ability of unceasing study, constantly reform and transform to promote the cohesion, attraction and competitive strength of university, and possess a leading position among the global universities.

## 3. The Features of Learning-Based University Culture

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<sup>+</sup> Corresponding Author. Postgraduate Student for Master's Degree. Tel: 15863513611; Email Address:jinxianchao@163.com .

The key of learning-based university culture is learning organization theory, therefore, the initiative, people-centeredness, harmoniousness and openness become the main features of learning-based university culture.

(1) Learning-based university culture is a kind of active culture. Systematic thinking is the foundation of the five disciplines of learning based organization [1]. Learning-based university is a self-organization system established by analyzing systematic archetype and an organization equipped with self-regulation feedback mechanism which can creatively learn, positively adapt environmental changes and keep pace with the times. Meanwhile, learning organization theory encourages individuals to learn and to be self-surmounted, as well as support personal development. Therefore, the staff's initiative and enthusiasm are encouraged and protected, and every person is the thinker full of creativity.

(2) Learning-based university culture is a kind of humanistic culture. Learning organization emphasizes individual's integrated development, the returning of human nature in the management and the emphasis of human living a meaningful life. In the construction of learning organization, human being is the elementary cell of organization, constantly pursuing self-transcendence and individual value. Therefore, this kind of university culture must act as respect and care people whose quintessence is to improve individual's cultural cultivation, emphasize his learning competence and learning value and respect independent personality.

(3) Learning-based university culture is a kind of harmonious culture. A university is an academic community. To sustain an academic community needs a group of people who hold the same academic value getting together, respecting and supporting each other. learning-based university manages to change the traditional mental patterns used by the teachers and students to identify their inter-relationship by advocating democratic and equal organization cultures, so as to enable the learning-based university to become a "educational organization model promoting teacher-students' interaction " in the campus atmosphere of democracy and equality[2].

(4) Learning-based university culture is a kind of opening culture. It is an significant concept of learning-based university culture to encourage university internal and opening, communication and learning, as well as between universities. The core values of learning-based university culture is open to the world, which respect individual differences, and stress that only enhancing communication and exchanging between scholars, can the academic thought sparks be ignited in the process. Only to confront future and the world and construct flexible humanistic spirit can university emergency ability be asserted.

#### **4. Path Analysis of University Culture Construction in the Perspective of Learning Based Organization Theory**

To construct learning-based university culture needs systematic, overall, coupled and dynamic thinking, getting a better understanding of university activities and accomplishing the reasonable collocation of university spiritual culture, system culture, behavioral culture and material culture.

(1) In the spiritual culture level, constructing research-oriented universities should be taken as their shared vision. Constructing research-oriented universities is to highlight the concepts of academic first and human-oriented. Firstly, the value of revering academy and encouraging learning should be set up to urge university people to reach the common sense of learning. Establishing lifelong learning value pursuit aims to cultivate people's conscious behavior and habit to learn. Secondly, the traditional humanism spirit should be carried forward to "comprehensively develop individual's personality and fully unleash their ability" and arouse their understanding of the possible prospects of human life [3] [4]. Thirdly, a humanistic environment which is beneficial to learning should be created. On the university campus, a kind of communicating atmosphere should be constructed, that is, open and frank, to urge university people fully communicate, learn from each other, be good at accepting others' advice and willing to cooperate. Fourthly, the spirit of encouraging innovation and bearing failure should be developed because "university must protect and cultivate thinkers, experimentalists, inventors teachers and students to explore social life phenomena and try to understand them under the circumstances of not bearing action responsibility"[5].

(2) In the system culture level, management mechanism of team learning should be constructed. Team learning is a significant feature of learning-based university culture. To construct management mechanism

for promoting team learning, the first thing is to create the atmosphere of academic freedom and multi-element co-existence. A university must accommodate various thoughts, schools, subjects' contents, values and academic talents, absorb favorable factors from various fields such as political, economic and cultural areas; guide many-faceted cultural contending and fusion. In the collision, exchange, fusion and mastering of various thoughts and ideas, a mixture of influences should be accepted and something new in what is old be found to force the universities to obtain further developing motivation. The relation between less popular and hot, humanism and scientific disciplines should be better dealt with to realize the atmosphere of "letting a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend and a hundred flowers blossom" in real. The second thing is to stress democratic management in university autonomy and put all the organization members in the managing masters' position to guide all the teachers and students to actively exercise democratic rights and manage principal university matters. In the university management, the application of academic power as well as the administrative power should be stressed. Firstly, the administrative and academic system should be scientifically divided to let academic power lead academic activities. Secondly, the roles of the group of professors should be played to build up decision-making and informing institutions, like board of professors. Lastly, academic organization institutions should be established and further improved to balance academic power and administrative power in universities.

(3) In the behavioral level, university men should be encouraged to surpass themselves and improve their mental patterns by the demonstration effects of elites. Both individual and groups have the ability to imitate. In the universities which have outstanding university cultures, the most respectful people are the elites who are the representatives of university values. The elites refer to core characters of university cultures and their personification, who set examples for both teachers and students to imitate and play vitally important roles in the shaping of university cultures. There are two kinds of elites, one of whom are the university presidents giving birth to and develop the universities, the other one of whom are alumni who are universities' famous teachers and influential public people. These elites respect the academic spirits of science, have strong social responsibilities, upright sense of mission and noble moral quality. They are the examples for teachers and students to learn from and imitate to enable people to find a practical relation between personal pursuit and university targets.

(4) In the material level, university cultures' facilities construction should be established to put up the material carriers for learning cultures. Good learning environment can increase people's working efficiency, therefore, learning-based universities should create good learning environment for teachers and students and provide necessary materials for them to learn. Needless to say, universities should have wide and beautiful campuses, architectural and well-stocked libraries, sufficient and advanced labs, commodious and bright classrooms, and warm and comfortable dormitories.....to provide a basic material environment and carrier for university-men's learning, so that they can promptly solve problems in learning, constantly learn and surpass themselves. Teachers and students' view should be broadened by constant lectures and academic reports.

## **5. Conclusion**

Overall, by creating learning atmosphere pervading the whole campus, the universities should give full play to every university man's creative ideation by constructing an organic, high-flexible, flat and more humanistic university culture management model which can sustainable develop. Learning-based university culture is a new type of organization culture, regarding learning as the source motivation of university development. On the one hand, learning is in favor of universities' sustainable development, on the other hand, it can also promotes people's overall development. Therefore, realizing the dynamic balance of organization developmental targets and people's growth targets represents the direction of university cultures' future development.

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