THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AND MANAGAEMENT COMPETENCIES SUSTAINABILITY: RUSSIAN MANAGERS PERSPECTIVE

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Concept of self-directed learning

- Self-directed learning is defined as self-learning in which learners have primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating they own learning experiences.

- Self-directed learning can be successful and powerful when it is systematic.

- It can take place equally inside and outside of the formal education institutions and does not infer learning in isolation.

- The learners may draw on others as help and extra recourse to assist in their learning activities. It is also considered as a necessary factor for lifelong learning implementation.

Self-directed learning key empirical findings

Researchers in the field of self-directed learning were questioning how much adults are involved in self-directed learning, whether they should be responsible for their own teaching, not only learning, what motivates them to self-direct they own learning, and how effective is self-directed learning.

Concepts of management competencies

- The term "competency" will be used, because it is appropriately linked to individuals rather than to specific job tasks.

- Management competencies are general descriptions of the underlying characteristics and behaviour needed to successfully perform a management role.

- The competencies provide a clear set of organisational expectations and enable managers to assess their strengths and development needs in relation to the competencies. At the same time, employees know what organisation expects from them.

Research question

Does Russian managers' management competencies correlate with work related self-directed learning?

- *Hypotheses 1*: Russian managers score high and very high on self-directed learning.

- *Hypotheses 2*: work related self-directed learning correlates with Russian managers' management competencies.

Research methodology I

- Empirical data analysis in this paper is based on quantitative research.

- Research instrument was structured questionnaire consisting of three parts: social – demographical characteristics, work related self-directed learning and management competency.

- Work related self – directed learning part in this research was adapted from Guglielmino and Giuglielmino (1978) and Cheetham and Chivers (2001). Meanwhile, management competencies part was adapted from Whetten and Cameron (2010).

Research methodology II

- 102 participants took part in this online research (from 102 participants 96 answered the questionnaire completely).

- Research sample (convenience sample approach) criteria were following: (1) Russian nationals, (2) Moscow based residency, (3) managerial position at work, and (4) workplace based and /or work related self-learning practice.

- Research participants represented different socio – demographical characteristics: (1) gender - male and female, (2) educational level – bachelors and masters degree, (3) business fields - market research, telecommunications, pharmaceutical, retail, and public relations, (4) managerial level (middle management).

- Research data were collected via online questionnaire during April and May of 2012.

Data analysis

1 Step: to analyse descriptive statistics on the responses to 25 item self-directed learning measure.

2 Step: to carry out and analyse Pierson's correlation between self-directed learning and management competencies measures.

3 Step: in order to explore further relationship between those two measures it was important to look at whether there was any underlying relationship. Therefore for the step three the data was tested to see, if it is strong enough and correct enough for principle components factor analysis before it was carried out.

4 Step: then reliability test was performed to see if chosen factors are reliable enough to carry out regression analysis .

5 Step: regression analysis.

*Please refer to the paper for detailed empirical results.

Discussion and conclusions I

According to the research data, first research hypothesis "Russian managers score high and very high on self-directed learning" was accepted.

Data show that the majority of Russian managers are keen or very keen in self-directed learning. These findings support findings of other researchers around the world that managers tend to practice self-directed learning (Livingstone, Eichler, 2005; Borghans et al., 2006), enjoy self-directed learning (Cracken, Winterton, 2006; Skule, 2004) and agree that this is beneficial for them (Long, Morris, 1995). Additionally, this research also showed that Russian managers support general notion of respect for education and knowledge in Russian business culture.

Discussion and conclusions II

The second hypothesis "Work related self-directed learning correlates with Russian managers' management competencies" was rejected.

Several reasons related to this should be discussed. *First* of all, research questionnaire was self compiled on the basis of Whetten and Cameron (2010), Guglielmino and Giuglielmino (1978), Cheetham and Chivers (2001) works and did not go through any reliability tests before giving it to the participants, which could have influenced the correlation results. *Second*, reason why self-directed learning did not have statistically significant influence on the management competencies could have been the sample size. *Third*, self-directed learning is very complex phenomena; it depends on many variables, not only the ones which have been anticipated to investigate in this research. As a concept, self-directed learning is hard to investigate, because most of the learning is spontaneous, unconscious, integrated in work and very hard to identify, as Eurat (2000) and Marsick and Watkins (1999) have noted.

Thank you for attention!