

# Learning organization Practices Impact on Employee's Organizational Commitment "An applied study on ASSTMT Employees"

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*This paper aims to test the impact of learning organization practices on the organizational commitment of the employees through measuring the relation between the learning organization dimensions and organizational commitment among the "Arab academy for science and technology and maritime transfer" managerial employees, The questionnaire was based on learning organization and organizational commitment indicators that had been modified and used locally .The study conducted in 2 months. The paper surveyed the literature review of the learning organization concept, organizational commitment, organizational learning. The study shows that, there is a significant relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment. Also the organizational commitment in the organization understudy is more explained by learning organization team and organizational level, than the individual level. Therefore, learning organization and organizational commitment are deeply interwoven and opens up new questions to be explored by future research such as: assessment the reasons behind the non-significant relationship between individual level and organizational commitment. Also it is recommended for the organization to enhance their employee commitment level.*

**Field of Research:** Human Resources Management

**JEL Codes:** 418-IAL

## 1. Introduction

Human beings learn till their death, no matter whatever they are learning at any stage of the life. A new-born baby learns from her mother laps and with the passage of time the baby robust into a mature human being by learning from the environment. So, it is always in a season for a man to learn. A mother learns from the environment and tells it to her child and her child learns from her. Both of them learn from each other and the socialized environment. As we people learn by learning together in this world. When this learning procedure happens in an organization then that organization become the world of the learning organization where every employee learn from each other and expose their ideas openly to their peers, seniors and colleagues, no matter who is in front of them; everyone is learning from each other in his own style. None of the candle loses its light while lightening another candle. So never stop sharing and helping others because it makes your life, world and organization (as a home) more beautiful. This complex corporate world would be more beautiful, successful and victorious if it will become the learning corporate world which means the learning organizations. Continuous improvement requires a commitment to learning. (Gravin, 2008)

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Organizational commitment which means employees adopting aims, goals and values of the organization and having high faith in these, having a strong will to remain in the organization is a serious issue with respect to effective usage of human element which has become the basic value for organizations. While organizations attempt to become learning organizations on one hand, on the other hand their requirement to create employee commitment appropriate to this makes these two matters attractive. However, number of studies which indicate the relationship between the concepts of becoming learning organization & organizational commitments (Atak, Erturgut, 2010). Also, the main reason behind selecting this topic is that the previous studies few as we will see in the previous studies section.

So these papers aims at testing the impact of learning organization practices on the organizational commitment level of the employees of the "Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport" and shape the relationship nature between learning organization and organizational commitment through developing a model support the organizational commitment level. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section two discusses the relevant literature. Section three presents research methodology, model, and data collection. Section four examines the results and analysis of this investigation. Finally, section 5: concludes this paper by outlining limitations & recommendations for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Conception of Learning Organization

Senge (1990) defined learning organizations as: an organization that possesses not only an adaptive capacity, but also "generativity" that is, the ability to create alternative futures. He believes that learning organization as an organization in which people enhance their abilities continuously to attain considerable results, grow new thinking patterns, and by doing this group and collective thinking can be spread. (Aghaei et al, 2012). Watkins and Marsick (2004) identified seven distinct but they related dimensions of a learning organization at individual, team, and organizational levels. These dimensions and their definitions are described as follows. The first dimension, continuous learning, represents an organization's effort to create continuous learning opportunities for all of its members. The second dimension, inquiry and dialogue, refers to an organization's effort in creating a culture of questioning, feedback, and experimentation. The third dimension, team learning, reflects the "spirit of collaboration and the collaborative skills that undergird the effective use of teams". The fourth dimension, empowerment, and means an organization's process to create and share a collective vision and get feedback from its members about the gap between the current status and the new vision. The fifth dimension, embedded system, indicates efforts to establish systems to capture and share learning. The sixth dimension, system connection, reflects global thinking and actions to connect the organization to its internal and external environment. The seventh dimension, strategic leadership, shows the extent to which leaders "think strategically about how to use learning to create change and to move the organization in new directions or new markets". The learning organization is viewed as one that has the capacity to integrate people and structures in order to move toward continuous learning and change. Yang (2003) argued that the first component represents people who comprise an organization, and the second component represents the structures and culture created by the social institution of the organization. Structural-level learning activities could serve as a refining function by

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filtering and incorporating individual and group learning into the organization's mission or effectiveness. Garvin (1993) defined learning organization as "an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights". Based on this definition, Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008) constructed the concept of the learning organization from the following three building blocks: 1) a supportive learning environment: an environment that supports learning has four characteristics, including psychological safety, appreciation of differences, openness to new ideas, and time for reflection (Garvin et al., 2008). Davis and Daley (2008) described that, in a learning organization, individual and group performance within the organization results in interactions with the environment; 2) concrete learning processes and practices: learning processes involve the generation, collection, interpretation, and dissemination of information. Garvin et al. (2008) pointed out that organizational learning is strongly influenced by the behavior of leaders. So, if leaders signal the importance of spending time on problem identification, knowledge transfer, and continuous learning, these learning organization practices are likely to flourish.

**Table 1: Dimensions of Learning Organization Applied in Technical and Vocational Colleges**

Dimensions	Definitions
Continuous Learning	The extent of developing learning in organization by learning how to learn new knowledge, values and skills and creating continuous learning opportunities through experiments for personal and career development on the job.
Dialogue & Inquiry	Dialogue is the extent to which culture of organization allows members to have open communication with open minds to talk, discuss, and explain their experiences and skills. Inquiry involves questioning about the views of others yet does not attack the individuals.
Collaboration	The degree to which an organization tries to design work for organizational members to achieve a unified action on common purposes, have shared vision and personal mastery to exchange their views and ideas and learn how to work collaboratively.
Embedded System	The extent of creating organizational capacity through both high and low technology systems and finding ways to maintain what is learned.
Empowerment	The process of enabling organization members to participate in policy making, to know how to get something done, to assess their needs, to influence others and to create a shared and collective vision. This process continues to get feedback from organization members to recognize the gap between the current status and the new vision.
System Connection	The extent to which an organization has open systems to connect the organization to its external and internal environment to help organization members to see the impact of their work on the entire organization and think worldwide.
Strategic Leadership	Refers to organizational leaders' competence to think strategically, being models, champion, support learning and energize organization to create change, and develop collective vision to help organization members to move in the new direction.

(Nazari and Pihie, 2012)

### 2.2 Learning Organization versus Organizational Learning

There are three normative distinctions between organizational learning and the learning organizations have been identified in the literature (Ortenblad, 2001). First, organizational learning is viewed as a process or set of activities, whereas the learning

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organization is seen as a form of organization. Second, some authors hold the view that learning takes place naturally in organizations, whereas it requires effort to develop a learning organization. Third, the literature on organizational learning emerged from academic inquiry, while the literature on the learning organization developed primarily from practice (Easterby-Smith, 1997). Tseng and McLean (2008) provided a conceptual framework to analyze the relationship between organizational learning and the learning organization. They found that there is a need for a greater comprehension of organizational learning that, in turn, will contribute to a better theoretical implementation of becoming a learning organization.

### 2.3 Organizational Commitment

#### 2.3.1 Concepts of Commitment to the Organization

There are different definitions for organizational commitment. They mostly define it as the attitude of a person towards his/her job. This attitude shows to what extent the person is attached to his/her job. In the other words, we can say that organizational commitment is the relative ability of people identification with their specific organization and the amount of involvement that they have with their organization. (Bahrami,2010)

Today's learning organization is increasingly under special attention among organizations that are interested in increasing competitive, innovative, and effective advantage. The current era is the time of hurried changes and uncertainty to future. If the organization not able to adapt itself with these changes, perhaps it would be in the jeopardy of downfall (Zadeh, 2005). Creating a learning organization protects usually these units against environmental changes. In addition, the main problems in many countries for accessing a target are absence or lack of work conscience, and professional and organizational commitment of staff in their different units and organizations. So, one of the reasons that indicates the importance of studying and exploring organizational commitment, is that those organizations with high level of organizational commitment, usually have higher performance, and less absence and delay by their staff .In many cases, organizations need individuals that bring benefit for the organization even beyond their regular duties of work (Nhryr et al,2010). All of the definitions used in the field of organizational commitment include common concepts which are the level of person's loyalty to the organization, having a sense of belonging to organization, willing to work and using all the forces for making progress in the organization. Meyer & Allen(1997) represent 3 dimensions or subscales for commitment: Emotional commitment: The affective component refers to attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in the organization. Continuance Commitment: The continuance component refers to a "tendency to engage in consistent lines of activity" on the basis of the individual's awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Normative Commitment: the normative component refers to commitment based on a moral belief or obligation that 'it is the right and moral thing" to remain with the organization Includes peoples feeling toward the necessity of staying in the organization.

#### 2.3.2 Learning Organization-Organizational Commitment Relationship

Several studies have reported a relationship between workplace learning and organizational commitment (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001; Kontoghiorghes &

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Bryant, 2004; McMurray & Dorai, 2001). These studies have found that participation in training and learning activities enhances employees' organizational commitment (Cho & Kwon, 2005). Considering the results of the previous studies on organizational commitment and learning organization practices, the relationship between the two constructs is reciprocal. Consequently, learning organization practices can assist in enhancing employee commitment toward the organization. Also, organizational commitment makes employees more motivated and eager to learn in the workplace.

Study conducted by Wang (2005) in the University of Minnesota showed that the components of learning organization consist of: participation, team learning, creating a systematic thinking, culture of learning organization and collaboration. Leadership strategy has a correlation with organizational commitment. He studied organization commitment in its three dimensions: affective, normative and continuance. These components had a relationship with the dimensions of organizational commitment. Egan et al (2004) showed that creating a culture of learning organization and job satisfaction and organizational commitment are positively related. A study conducted by Jeong et al (2007) showed that there is a relationship between the establishment of principles of organization and effectiveness of nurse managers (629 people). This cross-sectional study has been done in 9 hospitals in South Korea to measure the effectiveness of nurse managers, job satisfaction and organizational commitments. The results indicated that the establishment of the principles of learning organization and organizational commitment are related. These principals have increased commitment up to 24.9% and improved job satisfaction up to 22.6% in nurse managers. Principles of factors of this research are learning organization of Peter Senge's. Study done by Yarmohammadzadeh (2007) showed there is a positive relation between managers and assistants with components of learning organization. In addition, there was no meaningful relation between managers and assistants ideas considering their experience and level of education to serve them significant difference. Malekpour (2004) in his research entitled: "survey on organizational culture and organizational commitment" done on staffs of hospitals in Isfahan University of medical sciences concluded that discipline, work experience, level of education and type of employment affected organizational commitment in staffs. In across sectional study conducted by Najaf Aghaei(et al,2012) among employees of Sport and Youth Head Office of Western provinces of Iran to determine the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment showed that there were high and significant correlation between learning organization and organizational commitment ,also suggested to managers of the ministry departments to strengthen and enhance their employee commitment. In a study conducted by(Atak,Eturgut,2010)to determine the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment, and to determine whether "emotional commitment", "normative commitment "and "continuation commitment" which are subordinate elements of organizational commitment have effects on learning organization on Business Registered to Aegean Region chamber of industry (Izmir/Turkey),the results indicated that organizational commitment is an element which affects learning organization.(Yaghobi, etal, 2010) pointed that there is a significant relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment among nursing managers.(Rahman, Awang, 2013) pointed that there is a significant relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment among the public primary school senior teachers.

The previous studies pointed the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment types which are: emotional commitment, normative

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commitment and continuation commitment. But this research conducted to test the relationship between learning organizations dimensions levels which are: Individual, team or group level and organizational level and employee organizational commitment.

## 3. The Methodology and Model

### 3.1 Study Objective

- To test the impact of learning organization practices on the employees' organizational commitment.
- To determine the nature of the relation between learning organization dimensions and organizational commitment.

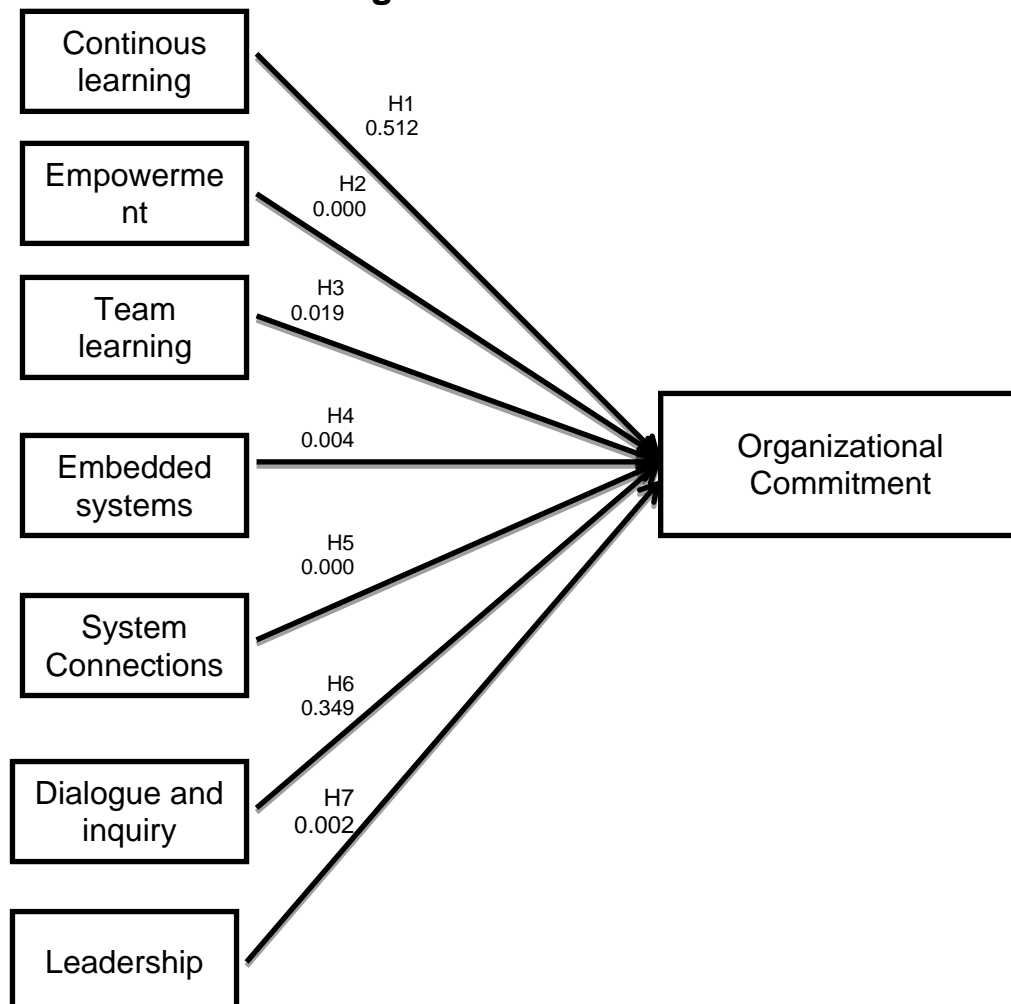
### 3.2 Study Question

- Is there a relationship between learning organization dimensions and organizational commitment?

### 3.3 Study Variables and Model

There are two variables in present study, independent variable is **learning Organization practices** and dependent variable is **Organizational Commitment**. This study will find out the relationships between learning organization dimensions and organizational commitment.

Figure 1: Research Model



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## 3.4 Study Hypothesis

**Confronting the above stated variables and objectives. The following unidirectional hypotheses are tested in the study,**

**H1:** There is a relationship between continuous learning and organizational commitment.

**H2:** There is a relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment.

**H3:** There is a relationship between team learning and organizational commitment.

**H4:** There is a relationship between embedded systems and organizational commitment.

**H5:** There is a relationship between system connections and organizational commitment.

**H6:** There is a relationship between dialogue and inquiry and organizational commitment.

**H7:** There is a relationship between providing leadership and organizational commitment.

## 3.5 Questionnaire

The study instrument is a questionnaire consists of 2 parts:1st part: Demographic information,2nd part learning organization dimensions which measure: continuous learning, empowerment, team learning, embedded systems, system connections, dialogue and inquiry organizational commitment which measure : a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, strong desire to maintain membership in the organization". The statements are assessed by using Likert scale of five points scale ranging from 1"highly agree" to 5"highly disagree". Based on Watkins and Marsick (1996, 1997), the seven dimensions of the learning organization questionnaire (DLOQ) (Tseng, 2010) .

Developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was used as the measurement for organizational commitment in this study. The OCQ is measured by 9 items and characterized by several related aspects of commitment: (1) a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization; (2) the degree of goal and value congruency within the organization; and (3) a desire to maintain membership (Tseng, 2010).

## 3.6 Sample

The selected sample was aconvenience sample of 111 employees working in managerial positions in the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transfer and the sample was as follows:56.2% males,43.8%females, 6.2% of sample aged in range 26-30 years, 43.8%% of sample aged in range 30-40 years, 18.8% of sample aged in range 41-45 years, 18.8% of sample aged in range 41-45 years, 12.5% of sample aged in range 46-50years, 12.5% of sample aged more than 50 years. 93% of sample working as ad-ministration manager, and 7% working as general manager. The entire sample work-ing in full time jobs, 88% of the sample had working experiences 16-20years and 12%had working experience more than 20 years. The entire sample married and has children.37% of the sample had bachelor degree in

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commerce and law, 25% had master degree in management, 38% had PHD degree. The study conducted in 2 months.

### 3.7 Data Analysis Technique

**Table 2: Reliability analysis**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Continuous Learning	0.925
Inquiry	0.668
Team Learning	0.672
Embedded Systems	0.839
Environment Connection	0.834
Empowerment	0.832
Leadership	0.666
Organizational Commitment	0.746

The data was analysed by using SPSS 16 soft-ware package .For assuring the accuracy of the analysis, it used more than one way to analysis which are: reliability analysis, multiple linear regression analysis and model, stepwise regression.

## 4. The Findings

### 4.1 Reliability Analysis

Cornbrash's alpha coefficient was applied to estimate the reliability of studied variables, where alpha values reveal the reliability and the internal consistency between the selected dimensions of the studied variables. It can be shown that the values of cronbach's alpha for the variables under study exceeds 0.65, which is an acceptable level for the reliability of the variables. See appendixes table (2)

### 4.2 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and Model:

Regression analysis is conducted to build the model through which organizational Learning Practices dimensions are tested to check their significance and impact on Organizational Commitment. The model was observed to be significant as shown in the table (3) (p value=.000, F value=14.937).

**Table 3: one way anova table**

ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.240	6	3.207	14.937	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	22.327	104	.215		
	Total	41.568	110			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership, Environment Connection, People Empowerment, Team Learning, Continuous Learning, Inquiry, embedded systems

b. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

After checking the significance of each variable, it was found that there are some variables are not significant, which means that their impact disappears in the presence



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of other variables, as shown in the table below. It could be found that the coefficients of the variables Continuous Learning (0.512) and Inquiry (0.349) are not significant as shown in the table (4).

This will lead the researcher to use stepwise regression to be able to check which variables can be deleted from the model, so as to find a significant model with minimal number of variables.

**Table 4: Regression analysis**  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.169	.307		3.803	.000
Continuous Learning	-.034	.052	-.057	-.658	.512
Inquiry	-.101	.108	-.132	-.941	.349
Team Learning	.143	.060	.185	2.388	.019
People Empowerment	.201	.047	.370	4.305	.000
Environment Connection	.177	.048	.280	3.727	.000
Strategic Leadership					
Embedded systems	.305 0.278	.096 0.335	.425 0.122	3.190 0.829	.002 0.004

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

### 4.3 Stepwise Regression

The SPSS stepwise regression procedure was employed in the table (5) to ascertain the proposed relationships between the independent variables and the dependant variable.

The model regression equation is created from the “Unstandardized Coefficients” in the coefficients table (5) As shown in model (1) the adjusted standard coefficient for inquiry and dialogue equals B=-.132 which is not significant (p=.349, T=-.941), continuous learning equals B=-.057 which is not significant (p=.512, T=-.658) .so, it was not significant relationship between inquiry and dialogue, continuous learning and organizational commitment. As shown in model (3) the adjusted standard coefficient for team learning equals B=.198 which is significant (p=.010, T=2.616), people empowerment equals B=.316 which is significant (p=.000, T=4.211), environment connection equals B=.273 which is significant (p=.000, T=3.679), strategic leadership equals B=.302 which is significant (p=.000, T=3.980), embedded systems equals B=.211 which is significant (p=.001, T=2.761) .so, it was not significant relationship between inquiry and dialogue , team learning and organizational commitment. Thus, the regression equation for predicting Organizational Commitment is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{1x1} + \beta_{2x2} + \dots \beta_{pxp} + \epsilon .$$

The table proposes the 3<sup>rd</sup> model:

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Organizational Commitment = 1.067 + 0.154\*Team Learning + 0.172\*People Empowerment + 0.173\*Environmental Connection + 0.217\*Strategic Leadership+0.483 Embedded systems

From the above equation it was found that the learning organization dimensions that explain the employee commitment in the organization under study are: team learning (reflects team or group level), people empowerment, environmental connection, strategic leadership and embedded systems(reflect organizational level).which means that the organizational commitment in our study explained by organizational level and team level and not impacted by individual level which conflict with Aghaei etal(2012)which pointed that organizational commitment level explained by continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue. (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bartlett, 2001; Kontoghiorghes & Bryant, 2004; McMurray & Dorai, 2001). These studies have found that participation in training and learning activities enhances employees' organizational commitment.

**Table 5: stepwise analysis**  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.169	.307		3.803	.000
	Continuous Learning	-.034	.052	-.057	-.658	.512
	Inquiry	-.101	.108	-.132	-.941	.349
	Team Learning	.143	.060	.185	2.388	.019
	People Empowerment	.201	.047	.370	4.305	.000
	Environment Connection	.177	.048	.280	3.727	.000
	Strategic Leadership	.305	.096	.425	3.190	.002
	Embedded systems	0.278	0.335	0.122	0.829	0.004
2	(Constant)	1.162	.306		3.791	.000
	Inquiry	-.117	.105	-.152	-1.119	.266
	Team Learning	.142	.060	.182	2.368	.020
	People Empowerment	.193	.045	.355	4.293	.000
	Environment Connection	.173	.047	.273	3.682	.000
	Strategic Leadership	.304	.095	.424	3.193	.002
3	(Constant)	1.067	.295		3.618	.000
	Team Learning	.154	.059	.198	2.616	.010
	People Empowerment	.172	.041	.316	4.211	.000
	Environment Connection	.173	.047	.273	3.679	.000
	Strategic Leadership	.217	.054	.302	3.980	.000
	Embedded systems	.483	.302	.211	2.761	0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

## 5. Summary and Conclusions

Regarding the results there is a significant relationship between learning organization dimensions and organizational commitment of employees of AASTMT.This result is parallel with Rahman & Awang (2013), Najaf Aghaei etal (2012), Yaghibi etal(2010), Atak &Eturgut(2010), Cho & Kwon(2005), Wang(2005), Egan etal (2004).All these researchers consider that organizational learning and learning organization as well as

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the attempt for developing learning organization, affect the rate of staff loyalty and commitment. (Najaf Aghaei et al,2012).also, it concluded from the stepwise model that there is a direct significant relationship between learning organization organizational level &team level dimensions and organizational commitment but there is no significant relation between individual level (dialogue & inquiry, continuous learning),which means the organizational commitment more explained by team level and organizational level . It concluded that the non significant relationship between organizational commitment, dialogue and inquiry and team learning might exist because of there is no clear development and continuous learning plan for the employees in the organization understudy. So it is recommended to the managers of the department of the organization understudy to encourage their employees to share their experiences and capabilities with their colleagues, prepare programs and opportunities for employees' creativity, and also improve their staff's skill in reasoning and expressing constructive and useful viewpoints and opinions. Finally regarding the role of "team learning", "people empowerment", "environmental connection", "strategic leadership" and "embedded systems" in clarifying the organizational commitment, it was recommended to the managers to involve their staff in decision making and so improve the staff's commitment by creating a sense of responsibility, enhance organizational capacity through technology.

Also for the future points research it is recommended to study the relationship between learning organization individual level dimension and organizational commitment, also measure the impact after setting a development plan for the employees.

The limitations faced this study was the survey collection problems because it was so difficult to collect the whole sample because of the work load of the employees, also the previous studies in this topic were few to support the structure of the study.

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