

IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN THE MANUFACTURING FIRMS

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction. Three research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to achieve the study's objectives. Literature in respect to the subject matter was reviewed. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population was 297, comprising all employees of Vintex Aluminum Asaba, Life Flour Mill Sapele, Differential Aluminum and Nelux Paint Benin. The sample size used for data analysis is 162. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The data collected from the administration of the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and inference statistics. The study's findings revealed a significant relationship between continuous learning and employee satisfaction; there is a significant relationship between dialogue and inquiring and employee satisfaction. It was concluded that there is a significant impact of constant learning, dialogue and inquiring on employee satisfaction. Learning organizations help employees learn, give time to support education, and reward employees for learning. It was so urged, among others, that companies should maintain a culture of continual learning.

Introduction

Continuous learning refers to the continuing growth of knowledge and skill sets. Continuous learning in the workplace, also known as professional development, is about gaining new skills and information while reinforcing what has already been taught. Daily habits and practices serve as the foundation for continual learning. Continuous learning may be achieved by any method of information acquisition that is consumed continually. It might occur during a set period or as lifetime learning. It can be official or informal, organized, or unstructured. Activities might include attending a formal course, observing more experienced employees, asking for help with an unfamiliar issue, exploring new and alternative work techniques, researching, having casual chat, and exercising the usage of a skill. (Wesley, 2020). Continuous learning in the workplace improves employee happiness, engagement, and knowledge retention. To be competitive, firms must constantly adapt to changing

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social and economic circumstances. Because an organization's performance is dependent on its people, employee skill sets must adapt to match the needs of the business environment (Tatar & Demir, 2022). Continuous learning in the workplace aims to help people maintain their knowledge and abilities throughout time. Employee knowledge increases and declines, peaking after an intense training experience and progressively declining over time due to a lack of reinforcement.

Employee knowledge is the consequence of a series of learning experiences. Continuous learning enables a business to achieve greater levels of employee knowledge while maintaining the peak through reinforcement activities at regular intervals that provide employee satisfaction (Tatar & Demir, 2022).

Dialogue is a practical approach to bringing workers to life, to engage them in a way that piques their interest, broadens their understanding, and develops a sense of belonging and unity. It is a dynamic and participatory method of learning that incorporates listening and communicating, transforming concepts into a lively discussion that leaves employees satisfied. One might utilize conversation to ask an employer or a colloquy questions. discussion may do much more than that; it can help employees build on one another's ideas, solve problems, broaden their perspectives, and learn via discussion. Instructors who value conversation find it advantageous to discuss talking and plan lectures in ways that steer students into meaningful discourse rather than expecting them to figure it out on their own (Harikkala-Laihinien & Hassett, 2018).

Employee satisfaction refers to whether or not employees are pleased and have their aspirations and needs met at work. Satisfied workers accomplish their duties and provide the contributions that the company requires. According to Nassani and Altuwaijr (2021), employee satisfaction is a broad phrase that refers to how pleased or content employees are with their employment, employee experiences, and workplaces. Employee contentment is a critical indication that helps establish an organization's general pulse, which is why many firms conduct frequent surveys to measure employee satisfaction and track satisfaction patterns over time. A high satisfaction rating indicates that employees are pleased with the way their company treats them. (Parul and Pooja, 2017). Employee work satisfaction contributes to retention but is not always a predictor of performance. Satisfaction stems from both physical things like as salary and benefits and intangible components such as involvement, recognition, and excellent leadership (Steben, 2023).

One strategy for firms to satisfy their workers is to foster continual learning, conversation, and enquiring; therefore, organizations must provide a helpful learning atmosphere. Employees may be hesitant to engage in new continuous learning initiatives because they are focused on meeting important deadlines. Gui-Xia and Abdullah (2022) discovered that continual learning and discussion promoted job stability, confidence, and personal progress, all of which contributed to employee happiness and improved work performance. Increased knowledge through continual learning leads to increased responsibility and a rise in employee remuneration. According to Nassani and Altuwaijr (2021), income is motivation to workers, which may create increased job satisfaction through which people "can work more efficiently and effectively", which can lead to enhanced organizations. Based on the foregoing, this study investigated the impact of continuous learning and inquiry on employee satisfaction, utilizing certain chosen enterprises in Delta and Edo States as case studies.

The Problem

The goal of a learning company is ongoing development and dedication, which leads to job satisfaction. The learning organizations comprise elements such as performance management, continuous learning, conversation, inquiry, in-house training level, career management, and qualification-based personnel selection. The absence of one of these aspects impairs the organization's operations. Most organizational changes and advancements are driven by learning and inquiry.

Organizations can only learn from workers who are ready to learn, and employee learning does not ensure organizational learning; nevertheless, organizational learning cannot occur without individual learning. This indicates that firms must be learning organizations to survive and prosper in a competitive environment, which is a process of growing capability and experience via constant learning, conversation, and questioning.

. Employee work discontent occurs when demands and expectations are not satisfied; this dissatisfaction reduces employee productivity and leads to stress-related negative outcomes. When employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, the organization's problems worsen. Employee discontent with work has severe effects on both the person and the company. Thus, this study looked at the impact of continuous learning, dialogue, and inquiry on employee satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

- i. Determine the impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction.
- ii. Evaluate the impact of dialogue and inquiry on employee satisfaction.

Research Questions

- i. Establish the impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction.
- ii. Examined the impact of dialogue and inquiry on employee satisfaction.

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction.

Ho₂: There is no significant impact of dialogue and inquiry on employee satisfaction.

Literature Underpinning

Conceptual Review

Continuous Learning

Continuous learning is the process of intentionally expanding our skills and knowledge for personal, professional, and organizational improvement. The most classic example of continuous learning is when an employee learns new hard skills, enabling them to gradually move up to more complex and challenging roles. Continuous learning also includes the development of soft skill sets such as leadership, management, collaboration, and more (Gaby, 2022). According to Isidora (2023), 94% of worldwide employees 40% of employees with poor training will leave the company within the first year. 86% of employees believe it's important for employers to provide learning opportunities, (Acar, 2021).

A learning workforce is a stronger one. Investing in workers and management ensures their continued value and capabilities. Continuous learning helps to Bicen & Demir, 2020): (1) identify existing skills gaps (2) pinpoint learning opportunities (3) refresh employee critical thinking and problem solving skills (4) maintain industry relevance (5) foster a culture of collaboration and innovation (6) invite external perspectives and ideas and (6) create a more responsive and proactive organization. These will enable organization to: stay at the top, employee retention and recruit the best employees. A well designed continuous learning system is not just for the good of organization but for individuals employees to update knowledge and skills, professional development, happier workers (satisfaction), stronger culture and being the best in a specific area (Danju, Demir, Çağlar, Özçelik, Coruhlu & Özturan, 2020).

Dialogue and Inquiring

Dialogue is an ambiguous term, one for which people have many different meanings. Many people use the term to refer to any interaction in which people with different views engage each other and somehow exchange those views (Jackson, 2019). According to Jackson (2019), dialogue is a communicative process in which people with different perspectives seek understanding. To be in dialogue means that participants are not only engaging each

other in light of their different views, but they are also striving to achieve a degree of mutual understanding and satisfaction.

Dialogue is a psychology-based blended learning program that teaches employees how to have serious debates, examine different points of view, and build critical thinking and conflict resolution skills. Employees appreciate the short sessions, interaction, built-in quizzes, multimedia, and optional practice chats with colleagues, which help reinforce what they learn while engaging with colleagues in low-stakes environments. (Seymour and Geldenhuys, 2018).

There's a great activity in dialogue where employees are asked to explain how certain things works. It is an eye-opening moment for many employees because they realize that once asked to share their knowledge, it might be complex and challenging to put some idea into words. It is a lesson for employees to recognize the limits of their knowledge and be more open to others and their ideas. Dialogue can create light bulb moments for employees that enable them to come to workplace with a mindset that gives them satisfaction (Parul & Pooja, 2017)

Inquiring means the act of asking information or an official investigation. Dialogue and inquiring are used to described formal/official investigation and lines of questioning, act of inquiring learning to continuous learning and dialogue with the aim of acquiring knowledge which leads to satisfaction (Cooks-Campbell, 2022).

The benefits of dialogue and inquiring based learning are:

Comprehension: Dialogue provides a unique opportunity for employees to verbalize their understanding, bring their thoughts out, and examine them closely. By engaging in dialogue employees can identify knowledge gaps, challenge their assumptions, and solidify their comprehension with the help of their colleagues. Other benefits include (Seymour & Geldenhuys, 2018).

Retention: In this contemporary world, technological devices are like extensions of minds. This has led to a decline in memory recall. But dialogue and inquiring can mitigate the side effects. When employees actively participate in conversation and process information verbally, they strengthen neural associations, ensuring that the information sticks with them long after the conversation ends.

Engagement and Satisfaction: In a dialogue-inquiring based learning, employees become more than passive recipients of information; they become active in workplace. Dialogue encourages employees to ask questions, share their perspectives, and contribute to collective knowledge which make employees happier.

Connection and belonging: Employees perform better when they feel they belong, which translates to higher achievement. Dialogue in respect to inquiring nurtures an inclusive environment where every employee's voice is valued. Through conversation, employees not only connect with organization but also with their colleagues. When employees talk to each other in meaningful ways, barriers come down, creating a workplace environment where employees feel heard, respected, and supported which help them reach their full potential.

Employee Satisfaction

Satisfied employees are critical to the health of your company. An employee who enjoys their job will work harder and stay with the company longer, so creating a space of positivity and respect in the workplace can contribute to company's success. Employees want job they will not dread of. They want to work in a healthy environment with friendly management and colleagues, do meaningful work, and get paid well. A business prioritizes employees' satisfaction, reap considerable benefits such as lower turnover, higher productivity, positive organization culture, and loyalty, According to Steben (2023), 20 per cent of employees feel satisfied and engaged at work, if employees are satisfied, they work diligently (Steben, 2023).

Impact of Continuous Learning on Employee Satisfaction

Although corporations stand to benefit significantly from fostering a culture of continuous learning, learning may also benefit every employee. Benefits that complement an organization's business needs might make it a more appealing place to work for employees. In the case of technical advancements that drive industry transformations, firms at the vanguard of change not only have quick access to specialists in developing technologies and methods, but also attract people who want to become experts.

Indeed, the Editorial Team (2023) discovered that some of the benefits of continuous learning for employees and organizations include: development possibilities, improved efficacy and competitive advantages, and increased job satisfaction. They also stated that a business that offers numerous possibilities for continual learning, whether self-directed, social, or formal, encourages workers to interact with their job in a more informed and meaningful manner. Employees who work for a firm that promotes continuous learning are more likely to stay with the company rather of leaving to pursue new chances (Danju et al., 2020).

Those who work for a learning organization are happier with their life. Individuals in an organization who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to support the company's aims. As a result, we may conclude that learning organizations contribute positively to employee work satisfaction. Employees who are unable to build the learning organization's atmosphere are likely to experience feelings of uneasiness and dissatisfaction over time. Individuals who are very stressed are more likely to lose their jobs (Danju et al., 2020). Continuous learning encourages individuals to assist one other learn, gives people time to promote learning, and rewards those who learn. (Tatar and Demir, 2022)

Impact of Dialogue and Inquiry on Employee satisfaction

The importance of dialogue on employee satisfaction cannot be overemphasis base on its contribution and benefits to organizational effectiveness. According to Harikkala-Laihinien and Hassett (2018), dialogue and inquiry lead to employee satisfaction. Satisfied employees are more motivated, responsive to change and more willing to perform different demanding work activities. Smith and Sweet (2021) revealed that satisfied employees are more productive, make more money for organization and create emotional engagement by loyal customers. They contribute to good organizational climate where people are productive, ethical and accountable. They remain with the organization for a longer period and are more committed to quality and growth than dissatisfied employees (Seymour & Geldenhuys, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework According to the literature, continuous learning, dialogue and inquiring are associated with employee satisfaction. Thus, Fig. 1 below depicts the theoretical framework of this study.

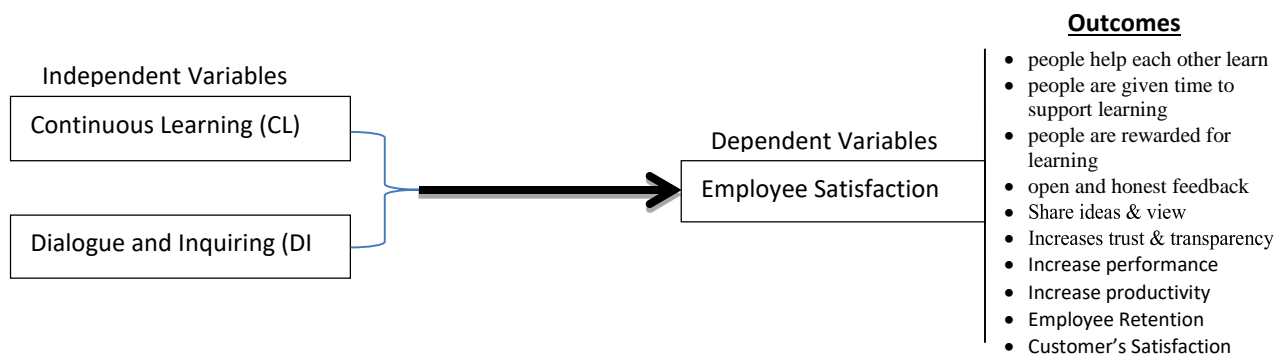


Fig. 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

Source: Researcher, 2024.

The above figure indicated the independent variables as continuous learning, dialogue, and inquiry while employee satisfaction was the dependent variable. An organization that encourages continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry make employees happier which makes them (employees) satisfied with their jobs. This satisfaction leads to people helping each other learn, people being given time to support learning, people being rewarded for learning, open and honest feedback, sharing ideas and views, increased trust & transparency, increased performance, increased productivity, employee retention, and customer satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Tatar and Demir (2022) explored if there is a link between organizational learning and work satisfaction, and if so, how well organizational learning, as an independent variable, predicts job satisfaction, as the dependent variable. The correlation analysis performed on the data revealed a statistically significant association between the "Organizational learning" variable and the "Job Satisfaction" variable. The correlation between these two variables is modest. Furthermore, a statistically significant link was discovered between a total of seven elements pertaining to the organizational learning variable and work satisfaction at medium strength.

The simple linear regression analysis used to investigate the extent to which organizational learning predicts work satisfaction revealed that the variation of 38.6% in job satisfaction changed according to organizational learning. This study's findings are consistent with earlier research, which has shown that work satisfaction is a major predictor of individual employee success.

Gui-Xia and Abdullah (2022) investigated whether job satisfaction could mediate the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment. A total of 452 lecturers from Heilongjiang province in China participated in this study. Structural equation modeling revealed that work satisfaction strongly mediated the relationship between the aspects of learning organization and organization, notably the effects of continuous learning, connection, and strategic leadership. Job satisfaction has also been shown to be a better predictor of organizational commitment than learning organizations. These findings are fully explored, and it is advised that a comprehensive strategy be developed to increase the learning organization and lecturer job satisfaction in all sectors of the organization.

Nassani & Altuwaijr (2021) determine Organizational learning culture has positive impact with job satisfaction on the productivity of the organization. The study adopted sample size of 250 and use descriptive and inference statistics to showed that there is a negative relationship between the organizational learning culture and turnover intention which the employees in the organizations they are not linked learning with their intention to leave, we figure out in this study the job satisfaction positively influence organizational commitment this is refer for the employees will commit their organizations when they have job satisfaction first and organizational commitment has negative relationship with turnover intention, the studies shown that there are employees that could stay in the organization even if they do not commit their organizations

Tools and Materials

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population comprised all employees of Vintex Aluminum Asaba (80), Life Flour Mill Sapele (76), Differential Aluminum (52) and Nelux Paint Benin (89), which made up of 297 employees. The sample size of the study was 170 which was derived from the total population via Taro Yamame (1967) Formula. The four firms were chosen through the random balloting technique. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection which was constructed based on the modified Likert 5-point scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The research instrument was face and contented validated. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test and retest method with a coefficient of reliability of 0.82 using Cronbach Alpha in SPSS 25. The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaires to the respondents after due permission

from the managers of the respective organizations. 170 copies were distributed but 162 were retrieved which showed a 95% retrieval rate. This is because some of the filled in questionnaire was lost, some were not properly filled, and some of the respondents did not return their copies. The data collected from the administration of the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and inference statistics. The research questions were answered using simple percentages and mean. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{5+4+3+2+1}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.0$$

Mean response that is greater than 3.0 was conserved as Agreed, mean response that is lesser than 3.0 was considered as Disagreed, while mean response that is equal to 3.0 was considered as neutral point.

The hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions via SPSS 25 at a significant level of 0.05. The model of multiple regressions is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$$

$$ES = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CL + \beta_2 DI$$

$$ES = f(CL, DI)$$

i. $ES = f(CL)$

$$ES = B_0 + B_1 CL_1 + E_1 \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

Where;

ES= Employee Satisfaction

CL= Continuous Learning

DI= Dialogue and Inquiring

i= Individual Respondents

β_0 = Constant Term

β_i = Regression Coefficient

E_i = Error Term

ii. $ES = f(DI)$

$$ES = \beta_0 + \beta_2 DI_2 + E_2 \dots \dots \dots (ii)$$

Where,

ES = Employee Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)

DI= Dialogue and Inquiring

CL (Continuous Learning) and DI (Dialogue and Inquiring) → Independent Variables

Analysis Of Data and Interpretation

Frequency Tables were used to present analyzed data. Research Questions were answered using simple percentage and meanwhile the hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions at a significant level of 0.05 in SPSS 25.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What is the impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction?

Table 1: impact of Continuous Learning on Employee Satisfaction

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	SD	Remark
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1.	In my organization, people help each other to learn.	102 (63%)	35 (22%)	5 (3%)	15 (9%)	5 (3%)	4.32	40.79	Accepted
2.	In my organization, people are given time to support learning.	50 (31%)	90 (56%)	8 (5%)	5 (3%)	9 (6%)	4.03	37.15	Accepted
3.	In my organization, people are rewarded for learning.	113 (70%)	22 (14%)	12 (7%)	15 (9%)	0 (0%)	4.44	45.75	Accepted
GRAND TOTAL							4.26	41.23	Accepted

Table 1 shows the means responses to items 1 – 3 as; 4.32, 4.03 and 4.44 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 4.26±41.23. This means that, with continuous learning, people help each other to learn, give time to support learning and people are rewarded for learning.

Research Question 2

What is the impact of dialogue and inquiry on employee satisfaction?

Table 2: impact of Dialogue and Inquiry on Employee Satisfaction

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	In my organization, people open and honest feedback to each other	70 (43%)	72 (44%)	5 (3%)	10 (6%)	5 (3%)	4.19	35.30	Accepted
2.	In my organization, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think.	60 (37%)	80 (49%)	1 (1%)	9 (6%)	12 (7%)	4.03	35.27	Accepted
3.	In my organization, people spend time building trust with each other	80 (49%)	50 (31%)	10 (6%)	12 (7%)	10 (6%)	4.10	31.60	Accepted
GRAND TOTAL							4.10	34.06	Accepted

Table 2 shows the means responses to items 4 – 6 as; 4.19, 4.03 and 4.10 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 4.10±34.06. This means that, with dialogue and inquiring, people give open and honest feedback to each other, people state their view and ask what others think, and people spend time building trust with each other.

Test of Hypotheses

They hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions in SPSS 25. The output of the Analysis is shown in Table 3 – 6 below:

Multiple Regression Model for the study

$$ES = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CL + \beta_2 DI$$

ES = Employee Satisfaction → Dependent

CL (Continuous Learning) and DI (Dialogue and Inquiring) → Independent Variables

β_0 = the value of ES when all the independent variables

$\beta_1 \beta_2$ = the estimated regression coefficients.

Table 4: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.900 ^a	.810	.807		.26518	.137

a. Predictors: (Constant), DI, CL

b. Dependent Variable: ES

The R value of 0.900 in the Model Summary Table (Table 4) represents the Pearson correlation. This implies that there is a strong and positive correlation across the variables since the value of r (0.900) tends to 1.

The R Square (r^2) value of 0.810 (Table 4) is known as the coefficient of determination. It shows the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. This implies that 81% of the variation in Employee Satisfaction (ES) can be explained by Continuous Learning (CL) and Dialogue and Inquiring (DI).

Table 5: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.523	2	23.762	337.910	.000 ^b
	Residual	11.181	159	.070		
	Total	58.704	161			

a. Dependent Variable: ES

b. Predictors: (Constant), DI, CL

The value of Sig (0.00) in Table 5 indicates that, the independent variables (CL and DI) combined has a statistically significant association with the dependent variable (ES).

Table 6: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
1	(Constant)	-.533	.183		-2.913	.004		
	CL	.628	.044	.580	14.390	.000	.738	1.355
	DI	.499	.044	.453	11.239	.003	.738	1.355

a. Dependent Variable: ES

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction.

The Sig-value (0.000) of Continuous Learning (CL) in Table 6 indicates that there is a significant relationship between Continuous Learning (CL) and Employee Satisfaction (ES) since the Sig-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. This means that, the null hypothesis which states that, there no significant impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction is rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact of continuous learning on employee satisfaction. In every additional effort to improve Continuous Learning (CL), Employee Satisfaction (ES) is expected to increase by 0.628 (Table 6) assuming Dialogue and Inquiring (DI) remain constant.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant impact of dialogue and inquiry on employee satisfaction.

The Sig-value (0.003) of Dialogue and Inquiring (DI) in Table 6 indicates that there is a significant relationship between Dialogue and Inquiring (DI) and Employee Satisfaction (ES) since the Sig-value (0.003) is lesser than 0.05. This means that, the null hypothesis which states that, there no significant impact of dialogue and inquiring on employee satisfaction is rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact of dialogue and inquiry on employee satisfaction. In every additional effort to improve Dialogue and inquiries (DI), Employee Satisfaction (ES) is expected to increase by 0.499 (Table 6) assuming Continuous Learning (CL) remains constant.

Findings

The finding of the study revealed from the answer to research question 1 (Table 1) and test of hypothesis 1 that there is a significant relationship between continuous learning and employee satisfaction. With continuous learning, employees help each other to learn, give time to support learning and employees are rewarded for learning. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Tatar and Demir (2022) who ascertained that continuous learning makes people help each other to learn and support each other.

The findings also revealed from the answer to research question 2 (Table 2) and the test of hypothesis 2 that there is a significant relationship between dialogue and inquiring and employee satisfaction. With dialogue and inquiring, employees give open and honest feedback to each other, state their view and ask what others think, and spend time building trust with each other. This finding is in line with the view of Jason (2019) who revealed that dialogue enables open and honest feedback and build trust among employees in workplace.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that continuous learning, dialogue, and inquiring have a significant impact on employee satisfaction. Learning organizations help employees learn, give time to support learning and employees are rewarded for learning. More also, learning organization aid open and honest feedback among employees, spend time together and build trust with each other.

Recommendation

1. Employers should sustain a culture of continuous learning.
2. Dialogue and inquiry should be encouraged and maintained among employees.

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