

Nurturing a Lifelong Learning Culture: Career Transition Expectations in India

Mohammed Shamsul Hoque¹, Dr. R. Vasanthan², Mani R³, Ahmed Alkhayyat⁴, A. Vanathi⁵

¹Professor of English, Daffodil International University, Bangladesh,
hoque.eng@daffodilvarsity.edu.bd

²Associate Professor of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus,
vasanthan@nagalanduniversity.ac.in

³Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Nagaland University, Kohima,
rmanigceb@gmail.com

⁴College of technical engineering, The Islamic university, Najaf, Iraq,
ahmedalkhayyat85@iunajaf.edu.iq

⁵Assoc Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Aditya Engineering
College, Surampalem, India. vanathi.andiran@aec.edu.in

Abstracts

This study looks into the possibility of engaging young professionals in continuous learning activities in India. A survey has been carried out to examine their motivations and the understanding that they have about their career and how it is possible for them to improve their access to resources, thereby gaining momentum in their career as well as learning as a whole. Many respondents have come out with the response that career opportunities within their current field through continuous learning are a possibility. There is a strong belief that continuous learning could facilitate career transitions and responsibilities. On the other hand, access to learning resources, according to the responses, is notable, but there are disparities and professionals have limited access, unlike normal people. With regard to support from educational institutions, there is a mixed feeling among the respondents, and the support is not that impressive. The whole study highlights the critical role of continuous learning in better performance as professionals as well as career development. This underlines the need for proper access to learning resources and stronger support from educational institutions to reach out to working professionals.

Keywords: Continuous learning, Career progression, Motivation, Access to resources, Educational support, Career transitions.

Introduction

Objectives

This study aims to

1. Access to the possibility of engaging in continuous learning among young professionals.
2. Identify the interest and motivation among professionals to engage in continuous learning.
3. Analyze the outcomes of continuous learning concerning career advancement, performance, and job satisfaction.
4. Explore the possibilities of starting new careers through continuous learning.
5. Evaluate the nature of the access that learners have to resources for continuous learning.

Relevance of the study

In India, most jobs, including bureaucratic ones, are offered to people at a very early stage of their life. This is also due to the fact that some courses offer potential jobs, which creates an interest among people to pursue a study program that offers employment, rather than one they are genuinely interested in. While analyzing in light of the interests of individuals and the potential contributions they could make by undertaking a career of their liking, it shows how things have taken a different direction. In fact, this is a loss for both the individual and the country. Therefore, it is important to promote learning at later stages of the lives of the professionals to ensure that individuals continue to contribute by engaging in lifelong learning, rather than completely cutting themselves off from the learning environment (Mathur et al., 2024).

Overview

Continuous learning has become increasingly essential in today's dynamic and competitive job market, as individuals seek to improve their skills and stay relevant in evolving industries. This section reviews the relevant literature on the role of educational institutions and organizations in supporting lifelong learning, professional development and lifelong learning initiatives.

Continuous learning is recognized as an important factor in career development (McNair et al., 2020). It enables individuals to acquire new skills, stay up-to-date with industry trends and adapt to changing job requirements (Felstead et al., 2019). Research by Schneid et al. (2015) found that continuous learning positively affects job performance, career advancement, and overall job satisfaction.

Motivations for engaging in continuous is not the same with everyone and learning does vary among individuals and it involves personal interest, career advancement, and skill acquisition for future roles (Nair & Webster, 2020). According to Huang et al. (2019), intrinsic factors such as self-improvement and interest often motivate individuals to pursue continuous learning opportunities.

Educational institutions play an important role in providing support to lifelong learning initiatives. They provide various resources such as online courses, workshops and mentoring

programs to facilitate continuous skills development (Cedefop, 2018). Research by Lopes & Baptista (2019) highlights the importance of institutional support in fostering a culture of lifelong learning among students and alumni (Sesmiarni et al, 2023).

Organizations play a significant role in the promotion of continuous learning among the professionals. There is considerable time spent in training programs, supporting initiatives, and professional development on the whole to improve the skills and abilities of the employees (Eraut, 2018). Studies by Rasmussen & Hughes (2018) emphasize the need for organizations to align learning initiatives with business objectives to maximize employee performance and their impact on organizational success.

Though the benefits of continuous learning is obvious, there are so many constraints among individuals and organizations, that include time constraints, financial limitations, and access to resources (Cedefop, 2020). Research by Harteis & Goller (2014) highlights the importance of addressing these barriers by means of flexible learning options and supportive organizational cultures.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design to collect data on engagement, motivations and perceived impacts of continuous learning among young professionals in India. There were 41 young professionals, primarily assistant professors and teachers, from various states of India including Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Kerala and West Bengal. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling.

Data were collected using an online survey form. The survey included both multiple-choice and open-ended questions to capture quantitative and qualitative data on participants' engagement in continuous learning, motivations, perceived career impacts, access to resources, and organizational support.

This study used a descriptive survey design to collect data on young professionals' engagement in continuous learning, their motivations, perceived career impacts, access to resources and institutional support in India. Participants, primarily assistant professors and teachers from states like Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Kerala and West Bengal, were recruited through convenience sampling, resulting in a sample size of 41. Data was collected through an online survey. Questions about demographic information (age, gender, occupation, and state of residence), frequency of participation in learning activities (eg, online courses, workshops, certifications), motivations for continuing learning (job performance improvement, career advancement, personal interest), and employment Perceived outcomes of learning include performance, career advancement, network expansion, earning potential, and job satisfaction. In addition, the survey examined the identification of new career opportunities, perceptions of the role of continuous learning in facilitating career transitions, and the availability of learning resources and organizational support. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed thematically to identify common themes. Ethical considerations include voluntary

participation, informed consent, and maintaining respondents' confidentiality and anonymity. The study acknowledges limitations such as the lack of generalizability due to convenience sampling and self-report data, and representativeness affected by the small sample size and concentration of participants from specific industries and states.

Results

Category	Response Summary
Engagement in Continuous Learning	70.7% of respondents engage in continuous learning, with 29.3% not currently involved.
Motivations for Learning	Motivations include job performance enhancement (65.9%) and personal interest (26.8%).
Perceived Career Impacts	Continuous learning positively influences performance (58.5%) and expands career opportunities (41.5%).
Career Opportunities	19.5% have identified new opportunities, while 46.3% explored different career paths.
Beliefs in Career Transitions	95.1% believe continuous learning facilitates career transitions, with 4.9% preferring stability.
Likelihood of Career Transition	70.7% are likely or very likely to consider career transitions based on acquired skills.
Resource Access	87.8% have good to moderate access to learning resources, while 12.2% face poor or no access.
Institutional Support	70.7% feel fully or moderately supported by educational institutions, while 29.3% feel minimally supported or unsupported.

Implications

1. The interest in continuous learning among respondents shows a growing appetite for skill development.
2. Organizations and educational institutions need to foster a culture that encourages and supports continuous learning.
3. Understanding among the respondents about learning highlights the demand for tailored learning programs.
4. Institutions can design initiatives to better meet the needs of young professionals.
5. Perceived career impacts such as improved job performance and expanded opportunities underscore the need for career development support.
6. Organizations may provide resources and guidance to help individuals leverage their learning for career growth.
7. There is a significant number of respondents looking for new career opportunities or exploring different which suggests the need for resources and support to enable informed career decision-making.
8. The general interest in continuous learning for career transitions indicates willingness among professionals to adapt and evolve. Institutions can aid in this process by offering relevant training and development opportunities tailored for career transitions.

The Relevance of UNESCO's Lifelong Learning Recommendations

UNESCO emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning for personal development, social cohesion and economic progress. It supports the development of inclusive learning environments that include formal, non-formal and informal education to make learning accessible to all (UNESCO, 2020a; UNESCO, 2020b). UNESCO supports countries in developing successful lifelong learning strategies through training initiatives and technical support (UNESCO, 2020b). The importance of inclusive education practices for diverse students is emphasized by the organization, guaranteeing fair access to learning opportunities for marginalized and disadvantaged groups (UNESCO, 2020a). One of the important attributes to look into is skill development that ensures learners have flexible skills in order to come up with answers to the ever-evolving workforce requirement (UNESCO, 2020a). UNESCO is presently supporting all the international links, such as the Global Learning Cities Network, to facilitate the exchange of successful methods and materials in order to bring about stronger learning communities in the world (UNESCO, 2020a).

In India, where children are generally advised to take up a career that is as safe as possible in their lives or are often ignored for their real potential, the guidance of UNESCO is particularly important. The great population of the nation also stands for the rich human resources. By offering the possibility of expressing the full potential of the individuals through the necessary education and life, one can expect a greater outcome from the individuals than normal professional performances. Moreover, the individuals will also experience personal satisfaction, improved work efficiency, and, hence, social and economic prosperity.

Conclusion

A careful analysis of the data highlights the fact that there is a vital need for continuous learning among young professionals in India. It is essential for them to get an opportunity, both for purposes of career progression and transition. In the world today, skilling is the first requirement for any kind of career and growth. The study clearly describes that all the participants have a lot of requirements to be continually engaged with the process of education; they need it for better work, for them to find new job opportunities, and also to follow their personal interests.

Educational institutions also need to extend support to individuals outside the campus in order to offer education as a lifelong journey. Education institutions must meet the challenging needs of students by offering support not only during their stay on campus but also later to continue their education. Education institutions should also be able to enable individuals to successfully manage career transitions. It is also obvious that educational content or the skill requirement of a particular time changes as per the changes in technological developments as well as in the day-to-day world. As per the findings, they suggest that it is essential for institutions in India to cater to the needs of working professionals who will benefit from lifelong learning initiatives. By investing in additional educational needs and by helping individuals even after formal education, educational institutions will be able to cater in the best possible way. This will also enable the individuals to reach their desired point of skill development and contribute significantly to the social and economic development of the nation.

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