**VELS INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED STUDIES DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES**

**A STUDY ON HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY FORMULATION IN ASHOK LEYLAND PVT LTD, CHENNAI**

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**ABSTRACT:**

The research addresses a specific gap at Ashok Leyland Limited, a company without a formal higher education policy aimed at advancing its workforce's academic qualifications. The task was to research and assist in developing such a policy to benefit its executives. Annually, Ashok Leyland recruits 100 to 200 talents and aims to elevate diploma holders to bachelor's degrees and existing talents to master's degrees or specialized certifications.

Utilizing a descriptive research design, this study captures data through semi-structured interviews, focusing on employee experiences, perceptions, and challenges regarding executive education. The findings indicate a strong alignment between organizational higher education policies and employee career ambitions, high satisfaction with the accessibility and scope of educational benefits, and a significant presence of engineering professionals among the workforce.

Practical implications suggest that leaders in the tourism and hospitality sectors should enhance leadership competences, promote organizational learning, and encourage innovation to improve business performance. For Ashok Leyland, the study recommends improving communication and training regarding higher education policies to mitigate knowledge gaps and enhance policy effectiveness. The research provides actionable insights for refining educational benefits to boost employee satisfaction and retention, optimizing talent across various departments, and customizing training initiatives based on specific experience levels within the organization.

**Keywords:**

Higher education policy, Specialized certifications, Executive education, Organizational higher education policies, Organizational learning, Customized training initiatives.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Policy making in corporate organizations is a critical process that governs the framework within which a company operates. These policies serve as guidelines and standards that dictate the actions, behaviours, and decisions of employees, managers, and other stakeholders within the organization. They cover various aspects such as employee conduct, operational procedures, compliance requirements, risk management, and strategic objectives.

In today's rapidly evolving global economy, the importance of continuous learning and skill development is paramount for both individual career growth and organizational success. Recognizing this, many forward-thinking corporations have established higher education policies to support their employees in pursuing further education and professional development opportunities. These policies outline the company's commitment to fostering a culture of lifelong learning and provide guidelines for employees seeking to enhance their skills and knowledge through higher education policies in corporate organizations typically encompass several key components:

Tuition Assistance Programs: Many corporations offer financial assistance or reimbursement for employees pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees, certificate programs, or professional development courses relevant to their roles or the company's industry. These tuition assistance programs may cover tuition fees, course materials, and sometimes even additional expenses like transportation or childcare.

Flexible Work Arrangements: To accommodate employees balancing work and higher education commitments, corporate higher education policies may include provisions for flexible work schedules, telecommuting options, or extended leave for academic purposes This flexibility helps employees manage their workload while pursuing educational goals.

Career Development Pathways: Corporate higher education policies often align with the company's talent development and succession planning strategies. They may include pathways for career advancement or promotion for employees who obtain additional qualifications or demonstrate enhanced skills through education and training.

Partnership with Educational Institutions: Some corporations establish partnerships or collaborations with universities, colleges, or online learning platforms to provide tailored educational programs for their employees. These partnerships may include customized curriculum development, discounted tuition rates, or access to exclusive resources and networking opportunities.

Professional Certification Support: In addition to traditional degree programs, corporate higher education policies may support employees in obtaining professional certifications or credentials relevant to their roles or industry. This may involve covering exam fees, study materials, or providing dedicated study time during work hours.

Evaluation and Accountability: Effective corporate higher education policies include mechanisms for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of educational initiatives. This may involve tracking employee participation and completion rates, assessing the return on investment in terms of improved job performance or retention, and soliciting feedback from employees to continuously refine and improve the program.

By investing in the education and professional development of their employees, corporate organizations not only enhance individual career prospects and job satisfaction but also cultivate a highly skilled and motivated workforce that contributes to the company's long-term growth and competitiveness. A well-designed higher education policy demonstrates a commitment to employee development, fosters a culture of continuous learning and innovation, and ultimately positions the organization as an employer of choice in the talent marketplace.

Higher education policies for corporate learning and development encompass strategies, initiatives, and guidelines aimed at fostering the ongoing education and skill development of employees within corporate organizations. These policies recognize the importance of continuous learning in enhancing employee capabilities, driving innovation, and maintaining competitiveness in today's dynamic business environment.

**Objectives of Study:**

* To study about the factor influencing the learning and development of employees.
* To conduct need assessment for learning and development.
* To analyse the relationship between educational institutions and corporates for potential learning and development collaborations.
* To suggest ideas for implementing in the higher education policy.

**Review of Literature**

**1. The corporate university model for continuous learning, training and development by Akram A. El‐Tannir**

Article publication year: 2002

## Abstract

This paper discusses the emerging model of “corporate university” (CU) for continuous learning in the corporate world. With specially tailored training, CUs aim at improving the productivity and skills of employees using the latest advances in information and telecommunication technology. Training in this model particularly is more responsive to corporate needs than other learning intervention methods and adds value to the company business goals by helping recruit and retain talent. Their special focus is on disseminating common culture and driving changes in the entire organization. The article presents, briefly, the main characteristics of corporate universities and three examples. The article suggests that the CU model is sustainable to suit continuous employee learning and skill development and highlights the new approach of “active learning” that is increasingly being adopted as the future tool for training and development.

**2. A study on digital learning, learning and development interventions and learnability of working executives in corporates**

**Nandeesh V. Hiremath, Amiya Kumar Mohapatra, Anil Subbarao** **Paila**

Article publication year: 2021

## Abstract

### Purpose

The digital learning and learning & development (L&D) at workplaces in corporates is having a significant challenge, where only about 1% of the week is spent on L&D by the employees. There is an array of recent L&D reports–by Deloitte, 2019; Skillsoft's, 2019; LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report-2019; UK L&D Report-2019; FICCI-NASSCOM and EY “Future of Jobs” Report-2017–which have clearly been indicating that the digital learning is fast-emerging as one of the realistic options. The employees invest their time and energy for skilling/up-skilling/re-skilling for remaining relevant to the emerging business context under volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) world and also coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is being researched.

### Design/methodology/approach.

The L&D interventions have primary objective of enhancing skills, competencies and career growth among employees, and the learning engagement styles/ systems are undergoing dramatic paradigm shifts. There is dire need to understand the impact of sweeping changes with Industry 4.0 and HR 4.0; however, there are only a few industry-centric studies that are available to assess the impact of technology on L&D with digital learning. Hence, there is a need to study the factors influencing various segments of workforce in large corporates, where the learning engagement with digital learning is fast emerging among corporates.

### Findings

Given the digital learning / L&D context incorporates, this research paper has attempted to review and analyse the opportunities, challenges and emerging trends with respect to leveraging technology and innovation to enhance L&D to deliver the business goals, under the 70:20:10 framework, with case analysis of ten different corporates (across different industry sectors) viz., Genpact, Nexval, Airbus, Siemens, AstraZeneca Pharma, HPCL, HGS (BPM), HP, Flipkart and IBM. The A-To-Z of Talent Management and Leadership Development (adopted version from India Leadership Academy, Publicis Sapient, 2019) best practices are analysed, summarized and presented to indicate emerging trends in Industry 4.0 era.

### Research limitations/implications.

This study has been carried out for just ten major corporates/ multinational companies (MNCs) operating in various sectors. The sample size used is relatively less; therefore, the study can be carried out with a larger sample size and deeper data analysis and insights across countries/continents. At present, this can be considered as a base-research for undertaking deep-dive analysis. The sectoral analysis and cross-industry perspectives require consideration in next studies. To address the sector-specific issues, the research can be undertaken for either a particular sector such as manufacturing, automotive, IT/ITeS, telecom, aviation, Agri-Tech and pharmaceutical, knowledge-based industries, etc. or comparative analysis across few related sectors required.

### Practical implications

This research has provided/shall provide a basis to understand the various factors that influence the L&D and digital learning ecosystem in large corporates. It is expected to provide a practical and also strategic perspective towards effective usage of digital learning systems (both in-house and open systems) for enhancing the effectiveness of L&D in the context of VUCA World and HR 4.0 around us. The proposed hypothesis of “The Digital Learning is the “Future of HR”, especially for the L&D in large Corporate Academies (in the context of Industry 4.0)” stands justified.

### Social implications

The clear shift from training culture to “Learning Culture” is possible and feasible with strategically planned digital learning/ L&D interventions, which benefits the corporates, employees, customers and the society at large.

### Originality/value

To the best of our knowledge, probably this is one of the first paper in the analysing the industry best L&D/Digital learning practices from an practitioners and academic perspective, as we live in the era of big-sized and byte sized micro-learning. This study contributes to the academics by providing insights on possible digital learning policies that can be practiced by large corporates, where the “ownership of learning and career growth” is transferred onto the employees. The result of this study complements the evolving digital learning trends, in line with science of self-driven and lifelong learning principle.

**Research Gap**

So far, Ashok Leyland Limited had no higher education policy and I have been assigned with the task to research and help with the processes for formulation of the Higher education policy so that it benefits their executives. At Ashok Leyland Limited, every year they recruit 100-200 talents. They want to enhance their diploma holders to bachelor's degree and existing talents to master's degree or special certifications. In order to bridge this gap, Ashok Leyland Limited has initiated the responsibility to frame a higher education policy that best benefits their executives.

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

A research design is an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research. It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted, and it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. It includes an outline of what the researcher will do from within the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data.

The research design adopted in this study is **DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**. Descriptive research design is the one that describes the situation as it exists at present. It includes survey and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The researcher has no control over the variables. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the situation, as it exists at present.

**Sampling Tools and Technique**

A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. Sampling design deals with the method of selecting the items to be observed for the study. Sample design is determined before data is collected. Researcher must select a sample design which would be reliable and appropriate for the research.

**Sampling Method:**

**Sample Size: 60**

**Statistical Tools:** Python, SPSS

**Data Analysis:**

**DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES:**

* Reliability Statistics
* ANOVA
* Correlation

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Reliability Statistics**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cronbach's Alpha** | **Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items** | **N of Items** |
| .504 | .465 | 20 |

**INTERPRETATION:**

The Cronbach's Alpha values provided indicate the internal consistency reliability of the scale used in the study. A Cronbach's Alpha of .504 suggests only moderate reliability, indicating some inconsistency in the responses. Similarly, the value based on standardized items, .465, also reflects relatively low reliability. With a total of 20 items, the scale's reliability falls below the desirable threshold. These results suggest potential issues with the reliability of the measurement instrument employed, indicating the need for further examination or potential revision to enhance its consistency.

**ANOVA**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Background**  | **Sum of Squares** | **df** | **Mean Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
| Between Groups | 2.371 | 1 | 2.371 | 12.762 | <.001 |
| Within Groups | 10.405 | 56 | .186 |  |  |
| **Total** | 12.776 | 57 |  |  |  |

**INTERPRETATION:**

The F-statistic value is 12.762 with a p-value (Sig.) of less than .001.

- This indicates that the between-groups variation is significantly larger than the within-groups variation.

Since the p-value is less than .001, we have significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis (ho).

- This means that there are significant differences between the means of the groups.

In conclusion, based on the ANOVA results, we reject the null hypothesis (ho) and accept the alternative hypothesis (h1), indicating that there are significant differences between the means of the groups.

**CORRELATION**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Choose the department that you belong to** | **What factors influence your choice of specialisation in management?** | **How do you prefer to pursue education or training in your chosen specialisation** | **What factors influence your choice of specialisation in engineering?** | **How do you prefer to pursue education or training in your chosen specialisation within engineering?** |
| Choose the department that you belong to | **Pearson Correlation** | 1 | .337\*\* | -.234 | -.176 | -.234 |
| **Sig. (2-tailed)** |  | .010 | .078 | .187 | .078 |
| What factors influence your choice of specialisation in management? | **Pearson Correlation** | .337\*\* | 1 | -.188 | .088 | -.188 |
| **Sig. (2-tailed)** | .010 |  | .158 | .513 | .158 |
| How do you prefer to pursue education or training in your chosen specialisation | **Pearson Correlation** | -.234 | -.188 | 1 | .155 | 1.000\*\* |
| **Sig. (2-tailed)** | .078 | .158 |  | .244 | <.001 |
| What factors influence your choice of specialisation in engineering? | **Pearson Correlation** | -.176 | .088 | .155 | 1 | .155 |
| **Sig. (2-tailed)** | .187 | .513 | .244 |  | .244 |
| How do you prefer to pursue education or training in your chosen specialisation within engineering? | **Pearson Correlation** | -.234 | -.188 | 1.000\*\* | .155 | 1 |
| **Sig. (2-tailed)** | .078 | .158 | <.001 | .244 |  |
| **\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).** |

**Findings:**

**Awareness and Understanding of Higher Education Policies**

1. Awareness of Higher Education Policies: 63.8% of respondents are aware of higher education policies.

2. Understanding of Objectives and Provisions: 77.6% of respondents understand the objectives and provisions of these policies.

3. Training or Communication Received: Only 55.2% of respondents have received training or communication regarding these policies.

**Impact of Higher Education Policies**

1. Impact on Employee Performance and Development: A significant 98.3% of respondents feel that higher education policies impact employee performance and development.

2. Encouragement from Supervisors: 72.4% of respondents receive encouragement from their supervisors or managers to pursue higher education opportunities.

3. Application Procedures and Requirements: 70.7% of respondents are familiar with the procedures and requirements to apply for higher education benefits within the organization.

4. Accessibility and Coverage of Benefits: 67.2% of respondents find the benefits accessible and adequately covered by the organization.

5. Impact on Career Advancement: Only 53.4% believe that higher education policies significantly impact career advancement opportunities within the organization.

6. Alignment with Personal Career Goals: 50.0% feel that the organization’s higher education policies align with their personal career goals.

**Department and Specialization Preferences**

1. Department: 60.3% of respondents belong to the engineering department.

2. Management Specialization:

 Factors Influencing Choice: 31.0%

 Preference for Pursuing Education: 31.0%

3. Engineering Specialization:

 Preferred Specialization: 44.8% prefer Automobile Engineering.

 Factors Influencing Choice: 29.3%

 Preference for Pursuing Education: 31.0% prefer to pursue education or training in their chosen specialization within engineering.

 **Suggestions:**

Employee Satisfaction Enhancement: The data indicates a high level of satisfaction with the current higher education benefits. It would be beneficial to continue maintaining or enhancing these benefits to contribute to overall employee satisfaction and retention.

Support Systems for Education Advancement: With 72.4% of respondents receiving encouragement from supervisors or managers to pursue higher education opportunities, this support could be further encouraged and formalized to boost morale and skill acquisition within the workforce.

Streamlining Communication: Since 70.7% of respondents are aware of the procedures and requirements to apply for higher education benefits, efforts can be made to ensure transparent and easily accessible communication about the application process for educational support systems.

Talent Development and Workflow Optimization: Understanding the departmental dynamics and resource allocation, further strategies for talent development and workflow optimization within each department can be explored, especially considering the larger workforce in Engineering compared to Management.

Policy Refinement for Career Goals Alignment: Considering that 96.6% of respondents feel their career goals are aligned with the organization's higher education policies, the document could delve into refining policies to better support individual aspirations, fostering a more engaged workforce.

**Conclusions:**

The study presents a detailed exploration of corporate learning and knowledge management, particularly focusing on the relationship between training and knowledge management within organizations, the importance of corporate universities, and the necessity for an effective Learning Management System (LMS). Additionally, there is an emphasis on the impact of digital transformation on learning and development in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The study suggests that the digital transformation is set to revolutionize business practices and necessitates a culture of change and innovation fostered by Learning & Development (L&D) professionals acting as change agents and designers of enhanced learning portfolios. Practical implications from the research offer guidance for tourism and hospitality leaders to enhance leadership competencies, organizational learning, and innovative practices to improve business performance. The study identifies a research gap related to the absence of a higher education policy at Ashok Leyland Limited, highlighting the need for a comprehensive study to aid in formulating a policy that benefits executives in their educational pursuits. The primary and secondary objectives of the study, along with the descriptive research design adopted, underscore the importance of understanding employee learning and development needs and fostering collaborations between educational institutions and corporations. The research also delves into the evolving landscape of digital learning and the need to adapt L&D interventions to meet the challenges posed by Industry 4.0 and HR 4.0. The study discusses the findings from an analysis of ten corporations, outlining the opportunities, challenges, and emerging trends in leveraging technology and innovation for enhancing L&D practices to achieve business objectives. Research limitations highlight the need for further studies with larger sample sizes and deeper data analysis to provide more comprehensive insights across industries and regions.

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