CONSTRUCTING A PERSONAL LEARNING NETWORK IN A CORPORATE ORGANIZATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF NEW HIRES

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Constructing a Personal Learning Network in a Corporate Organization:

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Rukiye Bektaş, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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ABSTRACT

Constructing a Personal Learning Network in a Corporate Organization: The Perspective of New Hires

Many companies have training programs where new hires and employees are intended to learn their assigned role and how to manage different tasks which might be out of their comfort zone, experience or profession. However, given the rapid pace of recent knowledge creation developments and the inability of formal training programs to keep up with the all required workplace learning, professionals and employees are in need of different resources to manage their assigned roles. The study aims to understand how the new hires in a corporate organization construct their Personal Learning Networks (PLN), what the components of the PLN are and how PLN plays a role in learning and performing entitled roles and responsibilities of them in order to meet their need of learning. As the qualitative research methodology, phenomenology was used to implement this study. Semi structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants who are newly hired in a corporate organization within telecommunication sector in Istanbul. The collected data were analyzed with content analysis method. The data analysis revealed that new hires learn their assigned roles and how to manage different tasks through informal learning. This informal learning process was based on their PLN. However, findings also showed that each participant has different preference order when using different source of information. Among responses it emerged that, source of information preference order is under influence of individual factors such as individual interest and educational background, and contextual factors such as structure of the project and availability of learning resources.

ÖZET

Kişisel Öğrenme Ağı Oluşumu: İşe Yeni Girenlerin Bakış Açısı

Pek çok şirkette, işe yeni alınanlara ve hali hazırda çalışanlara rol ve sorumluluklarını öğrenmeleri, konfor alanları dışındaki projelerde de başarılı olabilmeleri, deneyimleri ve meslekleri dışında sorumlu olabilecekleri farklı görevleri de yürütebilmeleri için eğitim programları tasarlanmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, son zamanlarda bilginin hızla artması, değişmesi ve örgün eğitim programlarının bu hızlı dönüşümün ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamaması göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, profesyonellerin ve çalışanların görev ve sorumluluklarını yerine getirmek için farklı bilgi kaynaklarına ihtiyacı olduğu görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, bir kurumsal organizasyondaki işe yeni alınan çalışanların kişisel öğrenme ağlarını nasıl oluşturduğunu, bu ağın parçalarının neler olduğunu ve bu ağın yeni iş görev ve sorumluluklarını öğrenme ve gerçekleştirmede nasıl bir rol oynadığını anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenoloji kullanılmıştır. İstanbul'da telekomünikasyon sektöründe faaliyet gösteren bir organizasyonda işe yeni alınan 20 katılımcı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Toplanan veriler içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Veri analizi, işe yeni alınanların kendi rol ve sorumluluklarını ve farklı görevleri algın öğrenme yoluyla öğrendiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Bu algın öğrenme sürecini kişisel öğrenme ağı aracılığı ile gerçekleşmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bulgular göstermiştir ki her bir katılımcı bilgi kaynaklarını farklı sırayla önceliklendirir. Görüşmeler sonucunda bilgi kaynağı tercihinin bireysel ilgi, eğitim altyapısı gibi bireysel faktörlerden ve projenin yapısı, öğrenme kaynaklarının bulunabilirliği gibi bağlamsal faktörlerden etkilendiği ortaya çıkmıştır.

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My parents, my brother, my best friends and my teachers - Thank you for all the beautiful things that you have added to my life.

To my beloved-family...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since Industrial Revolution, specifically during the 1940s, workplace learning started to become part of the workplace life (Marsick and Watkins, 1999, Walter, 2002). As Walter (2002) stated workplace learning is an area of practice in adult education, which gives different learning opportunities to employees. It made its breakthrough in the last three decades because of emerging needs of global knowledge-based economy, information revolution and digital transformation in the world. Through this process, the definition of the work has changed (Levin, 2005) to providing opportunities to employees for catching up latest revolutions and their requirements. Align with these changes, organizations have started to invest in workplace learning. In the Association for Talent Development's (ATD) 2017 State of the Industry report, it was stated that organizations spent $1,273 per employee in 2016 for learning and development activities (ATD, 2017).

In Turkey, although private sector has gained importance after 1980s with the establishment of new organizations, it started to play important role in industrial transformation since mid 1950s (Akyıldız, 1991; Aycan, 2001). Align with the increasing needs of new developing private sector and business organization, workplace learning gained importance throughout the progress of business organizations. These demands from the learning and development sector led increase in number of employees who work in workplace learning industry. However, while the number of people who work in training industry was increasing, the quality of the trainings were not increasing as expected because of the common belief which is that

anyone can work in training industry if they have some knowledge and interest in the field regardless of their educational backgrounds (Gauld & Miller, 2004).

Many companies have training programs where new hires and employees are intended to learn their assigned role and how to manage different tasks which might be out of their comfort zone, experience or profession. However, given the rapid pace of recent knowledge creation developments and the inability of formal training programs to keep up with the all required workplace learning, professionals and employees are in need of different resources to manage their assigned roles. Employees start to work without prior knowledge in the field and gain required knowledge and skills through informal learning in the workplace. Especially new hired employees are in a research of strategic ways and up-to-date solutions to adapt new tasks which come with the new job. These reasons give rise to interest in a new and better solution: The development of a Personal Learning Network (PLN) which provides the connections to people and information that support employees' workplace learning through social learning. PLN enables employees to interact and learn from each other and be up-to-date to recent developments about their profession through different platforms such as social media continuously. As Valkevaara (2002) stated, understanding individual learning experiences of employees in the workplace is essential to understand the development of expertise in any profession. For this reason, the purpose of the study is to understand how the new hires in a corporate organization construct their PLN, what the components of the PLN are, and how PLN plays a role in learning and performing processes of entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires.

1. 1 Purpose of the study

Development and maintenance of the network connections is critical in terms of learning the assigned roles in the organization (Sedgwick, 2016). For this reason, the purpose of the study is to understand new hires' construction process of their PLN, to identify the components of these PLNs are, and the role of these PLNs in learning and performing processes of entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires.

1. 2 Research questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. How do new hires create their PLN?
2. What influences new hires in their choices of PLN resources?
3. How do PLN contributes to entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires?

1. 3 Significance of the study

Many corporate organizations plan training programs so that new employees are ready for new roles and responsibilities. However, because of today's rapidly changing world, it is difficult for formal education programs to meet the training needs of business life. For this reason, many institutions and employees have turned to social learning. The PLN supports social learning by linking people and information. This thesis study aims to raise awareness of how the new hires in the corporate organization construct their PLN, what the components of the PLN are and how PLN plays a role in learning and performing processes of entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires. This awareness will provide a perspective and

methodology for the training programs that meet needs of employees, especially new hires, with little cost and more efficiency.

1. 4 Structure of the thesis

The structure of this study designed as follows. The second chapter of the thesis consists of the literature review under the titles of (a) describing adult learning and its types, (b) explaining informal learning within the context of social learning, (c) describing workplace learning within the context of corporate learning and (d) explaining personal learning network and its components. The third chapter includes information on methodology, research design, research settings, research participants, data collection tools, data collection procedures and data analysis. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the data collection and data analysis including demographic information of the participants and discussion of the findings. The thesis study concludes with fifth chapter which includes conclusions, limitations and recommendations for organizations, new hires and further studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides conceptual framework to understand phenomenon of personal learning network within the context of adult learning, informal learning and workplace learning. First, the chapter explains adult learning through main theories and models, which are namely experiential theory, andragogy, reflection-in-action, transformative learning and situated learning. Then, the chapter explains main adult learning types which are formal learning, informal learning and non-formal learning. Next, the chapter moves on to elaborate informal learning to frame focus of the thesis within context of social learning. Later, the chapter focuses on one of the informal learning types, which is workplace learning and explains it within the context of corporate organizations. After describing the conceptual framework, this chapter concludes by explaining personal learning network within this conceptual framework.

2. 1 Adult learning

Adult learning is a constantly changing mixture of rearrangement of old theories, new theories, and models. That is because adult learning is a complex phenomenon that cannot be described by just one explanation. Different theories and models are proposed to explain adult learning. Each of them explain different parts of the learning because single theory or model is not enough to define the adult learning (Meriam, 2005). As Meriam (2001) stated, adult learning differs from person to person and from context to context. Therefore, instead of defining adult learning theory via a single theory, it will be more beneficial to define it through a

combination of different leading adult learning theories and models such as experiential theory, andragogy, reflection-in-action, transformative learning and situated learning.

In 1926, Lindeman started to build bases of adult learning by proposing key assumptions about adult learners, which are accepted as building blocks of adult learning theories such as andragogy, self-directed learning and experiential learning. Adult learning theories have continued to develop with different focuses.

In the late 1960s, Knowles created the concept of andragogy by starting from Lindeman's ideas on adult learning. He defines andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults to learn" (Knowles, 1980; p.43). Also, andragogy is identified as adult version of pedagogy which is about science of teaching children. The concept of Andragogy by Knowles has been quite influential in the field of adult learning. During this period, some criticisms were developed such as being a learning principle rather than a learning theory (Merriam, 2005). Also Knowles accepted this criticism but he said that these learning principles created a framework for the theory (Merriam, 2005).

In the concept of andragogy, adults are defined as self-directed, autonomous and growth oriented learners, which also creates the criticism about assuming adults as homogenous group of people. After these criticisms, with taking social context into consideration, Knowles et.al. (1998) developed a new adult learning approach which is called as Andragogy in Practice. As it is shown in Figure 1, according to the new model, learning goals are based on individual, institutional and societal development. Also, in this model, adult learning principles were brought together under the umbrella of andragogical principles through practice by taking individual differences, subject matter differences and situational differences into consideration.

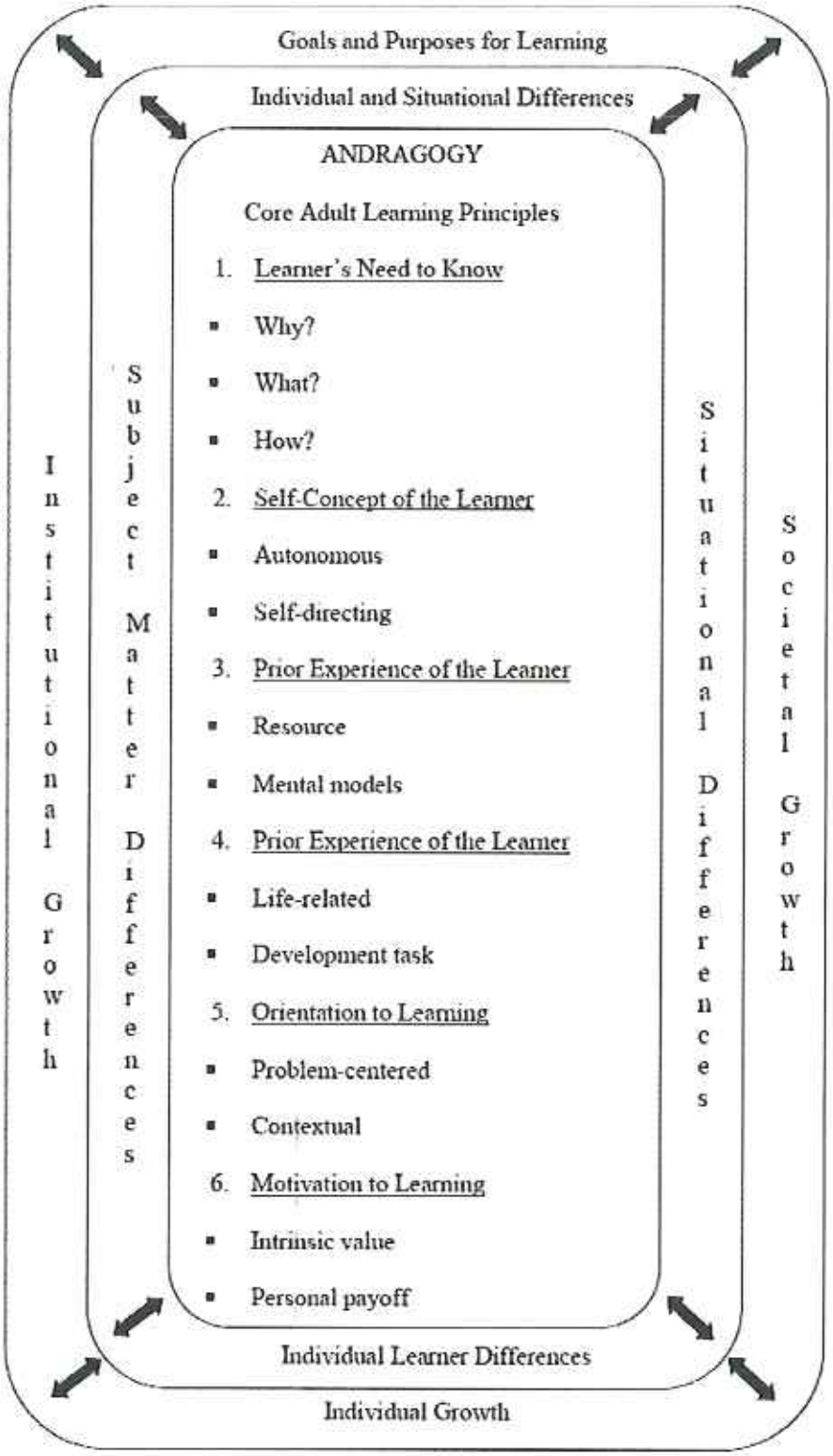


Figure 1. Andragogy in practice
Source: Knowles, Holton III and Swanson, 1998, p.182.

In 1983, Schön claimed that learning requires reflection of practice in order to change experience to knowledge. Through reflection, a person can transform their experience to knowledge then transfer this knowledge to new contexts. For example, in a workplace context, people can get a grip of their experiences and transform these experiences through reflection.

Besides that, Schön (1987) mentioned the role of coaching and encouragement in the process of learning in the profession by saying that people can learn everything if they are given right coaching and enough encouragement. First step of reflection in action model starts with describing the experience objectively. In the second step of the model, people are guided to describe their feelings which come into the open during the experience. Then, as a last stage, results are re-assessed according to new perspective for the experience.

With the focus on experience, Kolb (1984) created experiential learning and defined it as a process of creating knowledge from experience. Learning form experience creates learning loop. As it is shown in Figure 2, Kolb (1984) claims that the process of learning is based on these interactions which occur between personal and social knowledge. He also believes that interactions in the workplace creates meaning for learning and provides development opportunities. According to Kolb (1984), expertise in a profession is gained through experience, which comes from socialization at the work because workplace is where the person builds bridges between self and learning resources. Kolb claimed that workplace is important place for both interacting other people and gaining professional experience because within workplace context, people can catch development opportunities while working.

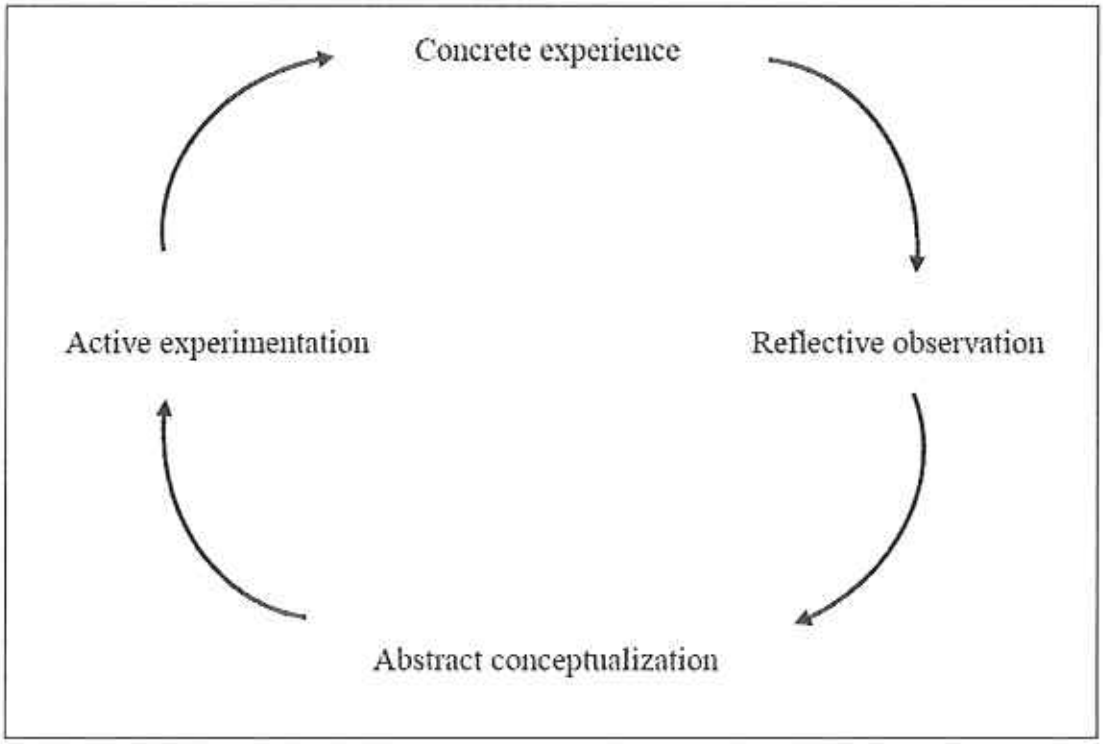


Figure 2. Kolb's experiential learning cycle
Source: Kolb, 1984, p.42.

As a different adult learning theory, in 1991, Mezirov developed the transformative learning theory. It is based on the idea of meaning making process through learning. Mezirov (2000) explained this meaning making process as using previous inferences and experiences to create meaning of further experiences. These previous inferences and experiences are created based on contextual factors which are important for formation of identity. That is why, in transformative learning theory, learning process requires taking cultural, psychological and socioeconomic factors into consideration.

Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) developed the situated learning which is based on idea of learning in everyday settings. Focuses of situated learning theory includes all the focuses of other adult learning theories such as activity, context and culture. Contrary to this definition, Lave and Wenger (1991) said that meaningful

learning requires social and physical context. Situated learning theory developed in order to fill the gap in traditional definition of adult learning because previously it is defined as internalization of knowledge but it does not explain how people learn new knowledge and skills without formal training (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson and Unwin, 2005). Lave and Wenger (1991) emphasized the importance of social practice for development of new identity and expertise in profession. Because learning process of newcomers cannot be separated from identity. That is why, situated learning theory creates theoretical and conceptual framework to understand workplace learning.

At the beginning of the 20th century, adult learning theory started to focus on personal learners in North America. In order to enable people become empowered and independent, it has been important to know how learners utilize information. Although individual adult learner has been the focus of andragogy, self-directed learning and transformational learning, recently, there is increasing attention to effects of learning place and multi-dimensionality of learning. This shift to context of learning like workplace in the focus of adult learning, creates more holistic understanding for adult learning. This holistic understanding comes from combination of the body, emotions, the spirit and the mind because, in order to learn meaningfully, there should be physical and embodied experience (Sedgwick, 2016).

Besides these, adult learning includes formal, informal and non-formal learning characteristics based on context of learning. Formal learning occurs within structured contexts like schools (Pettenati & Cigognini, 2007). In this type of learning, learner has little effect on how learning occurs and what is taught. Non-formal learning occurs outside of the structured contexts so that it is not explicitly designed as learning but is conducted with activities that involve significant learning

outcomes. Within non-formal learning context, it is not necessary for learning activities to be organized in a specific or definite face-to-face environment. Besides these, informal learning is expressed as learning related to daily life activities such as work life, family life or leisure time. Often referred to as experiential learning and partially accidental learning. Within informal learning context, learning objectives are not structured in terms of learning time or support. The requirements of formal education are often out of question in case of informal learning process. In the end, adult learning has many theories, models, types and characteristics. However, within the context of this thesis, in the following the researcher focuses on features of informal learning.

2.2 Informal learning

Informal learning is a self-developed, non-structured learning process that provide people to acquire the information they need through their surroundings or through experiencing themselves. Livingstone (2001) emphasized difference between definitions of informal learning, informal education and informal training because as he said that informal education and informal training require institutional recognition whereas informal learning is based on self-direction. There are many differences between formal education and informal education. One of them is that informal learning can continue for life and it can take place everywhere such as in family, in friends' environment, in social media, in street etc. Informal education can also take place at the same time as formal education is happening in educational institutions.

According to Marsick and Watkins (2005), informal learning is the main form of learning in the places because it focuses on not only learner but also learner's experience during learning journey. Also for Eraut (2004) stated the importance of

informal learning because of its emphasis on social side of learning besides personal activity. In 1940s, Miller and Dollard stated that learning occurs through observation and reinforcement of observed behavior. In 1954, Rotter stated a new theory which is based on cognitivism, behaviorism and personality theory. According to Rotter's theory, human behavior is a result of social human interaction of people in meaningful environment, which is a starting point to apart process of learning from behaviorist approach (Phares, 1980). As Knowles (1980) stated that adult learning is based on cause effect relation, which is also affected by many interrelated factors such as social context, human interactions and experience of person. These studies provide useful insights for adult educators to explain how adults learn and social role acquisition (Daloz, 1999; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Galbraith & Cohen, 1995; Mullen, 2005). All in all, by taking self-efficacy and self-assessment as main criteria which show how people feel in a specific context and how effective interactions of people in specific environment, Cofer (2000) defined informal learning as a learning journey which is based on daily experiences of learner in different places. Although informal learning has many features, within the focus of the thesis, the researcher only focuses on features that are closely related to workplace learning.

Informal learning in the workplace means learning journey is not shaped by the organization (Education Development Center, 1998). According to Lohman (2000), informal learning includes learning activities which provide development in required knowledge and skills for intended profession. According to Livingstone (2001) the scope of self-direction includes intentional learning which is done by employee to gain expertise in profession.

Marsick and Volpe (1999) stated the resource of informal learning in the workplace as an integration of work and daily experiences which is result of

reflecting from others and learning with/from others. Employees use informal learning in order to expertise in the profession, learn other perspectives, gain support, be able to receive feedback, be familiar with the culture of the organization, to align with the culture of the organization and to learn unwritten rules of the organization (Conlon, 2004). As it is shown in Figure 3, Marsick and Watkins (1999) developed a model to identify ways of informal learning happens in the workplace.

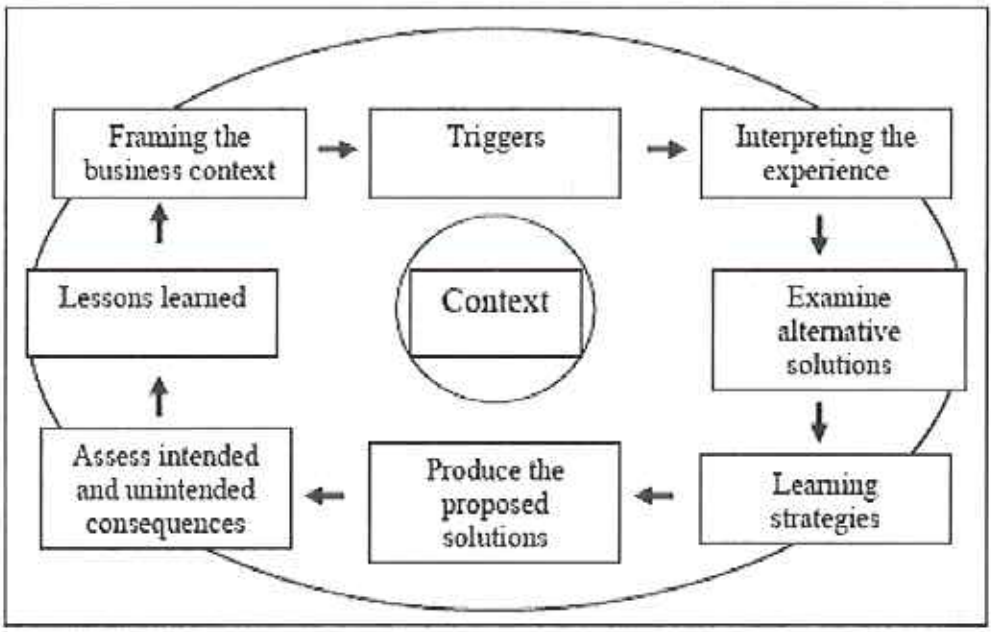


Figure 3. Informal and incidental learning model

Source: Marsick and Watkins, 2005, p. 155.

According to model, daily activities initiate the learning during working and being in the organizational context. Every new experience and challenge cause employee to assess situation, decide the most suitable solution and take the required actions according to previous learning context. After taking actions, employee evaluates the results to see whether it is compatible with the intended goals. This journey which is explained by the model of Marsick and Watkins (1999), shows the

meaning making process of previous learnings. At the same time, it shows informal learning process in workplaces, which includes self-directed learning, networking, mentoring and performance planning.

Besides other definitions of informal learning, Garrick (1998) said, informal learning is a learning which is highly under effects of social position of the person at the workplace. That is why, he differentiates informal learning from learning informally. He explains informal learning as a learning which happens in the context of management and human resources whereas learning informally is defined as person's instantaneous experiences in daily life. Informal learning is used to increase efficiency and productivity of the organization whereas learning informally is used to develop employee as a person. Garrick (1998) criticizes the fact that informal learning only is used to make employees to learn more efficiently in order to be more productive in their everyday work.

In order to provide broader understanding, in the following the researcher explains workplace learning within the context of corporate organizations.

2.3 Workplace learning

In the literature, workplace learning is explained with different definitions. Boud and Garrick (1999) defined workplace learning as gaining knowledge for specific capabilities of profession and re-utilization of already existing knowledge according to required capabilities of profession. They also stated that these various definitions are derived from different learning purposes and workplaces contexts (Boud & Garrick, 1999). Fenwick (2001) stated reason of diversity as "human change or growth that occurs primarily in activities and contexts of works" (p.4).

There are common forms of workplace learning like on-the-job training and off-the-job training. On the job training means training of employee about how to fulfill a specific role by literally doing the job. In this type of training, production and learning happens at the same time (Silverman, 2003). Off the job training includes many different types according to relation between work and learning that includes both formal and informal characteristics based on various learning situations. According to Malcolm, Hodkinson and Colley (2003), this relation creates the nature of learning which affects effectiveness of learning. Besides, Barnett (1999) said that the relationship between learning and work should be defined according to different levels which are personal and organizational levels and according to different models which are formal and informal learning. Informal learning in the workplace means learning journey is not shaped by the organization (Education Development Center, 1998). Formal learning includes planned learning activities which can be happen in the work or outside of the work (Silverman, 2003).

In order to keep up with the world, organizations promotes learning new skills and knowledge (Fuller & Unwin, 2003). Workplace learning may be occur between group of employees through working together in order to create new values for their organization and self, formally or informally. This leads employees to use resources like reading books, watching videos or learning through computers etc. in order to learn new knowledge and gain new skills.

In order to create whole learning culture throughout organization, employees and organizations have their own parts to participate which generally happens through work-based interactions (Collin et al, 2011; Doornbos et al, 2008; Felstead et al, 2005; Fenwick, 2008). As Fenwick (2008) stated these interactions are the results of dynamic relation between employees and organizations. Studies show that 80% of

workplace learning happens informally by using coaching, mentoring or social learning (Yeo, 2008). However, there is tendency to state that separately using informal and formal learning cannot be enough to provide development in required knowledge and skills for intended profession (Svenson & Ellström, 2004; Malcolm, 2003; Lohman, 2000). They generally criticized the literature of workplace learning because of its focus on informal learning, which is result of industrialized world. That is why, workplace learning should have characteristics and practices of both formal and informal learning.

In order to survive in competitive world of corporate organizations, corporate learning provides opportunity to produce new solutions. That is why, there is global emphasis and investment on corporate learning. Although the term of learning is generally used to refer activities of training team in the companies, learning in corporate organizations have more wide extent which is based on companywide constant learning culture. Despite the fact that learning focused companies have better profit growth and revenue, training departments and learning activities are generally ignored. As it before mentioned, workplace learning aims to develop employees by improving their skills and increasing their knowledge through informal or formal learning (Soares 2009).

In corporate organizations, formal learning like certification programs became less popular. However, despite of tendency to make informal learning more popular in the scope of workplace learning, Silverman (2003) stated that characteristics of workplace and organization are the determinant factors of the type of the workplace learning. Also, Bishop et al (2006) pointed out effect of organizational culture, value of knowledge, social network of employees and convenience of knowledge for employees on the learning type of the organization.

Under the light of these factors, both informal and formal learning may provide improvement opportunities for employee and organization, at the same time (Crouse et al, 2011; Lancaster, 2009).

According to researchers like Felstead et al (2005), Hager & Johnsson (2009) and Silverman (2003), employees learn more from each other while coping up with daily struggles of the workplace. That is why, experienced employees of an organization can be defined as most valuable information source for other employees. Researchers like Muhamad and Idris (2005) and Silverman (2003) also draw attention to effects of cultural base on new hires while learning required skills and knowledge of the specific profession in the organization.

In order to meet needs of the market, organizations make decision about their roadmap on why train, how train and who to train based on their vision, mission and experiences (Soares, 2009). Multitasking, in order to keep up emerging technologies and to adapt new profession, requires learning process which combines people, ideas, information and digital platforms, which also requires fostering and maintaining connection with knowledge resources. George Siemens (2004) created connectivism to see how learning can be evolved to keep up with the new technology through interaction with knowledge networks. It focuses on interaction, learning from each other, pattern recognition as a learning strategy and being up-to-date to recent developments about profession through different platforms such as social media. As Siemens (2005) explained, a person can choose what to learn from incoming information according to meaning of the information. In this regard, learning in corporate organizations can mutually meet demands of employees and employers through human interactions, socialization and personal networks in the workplace.

In the end, adult learning, informal learning and workplace learning within the context of corporate organizations are the main background concepts of the personal learning networks. Having presented the conceptual framework of the phenomenon, in the following I explore the definition and features of personal learning networks.

2.4 Personal learning networks (PLN)

Personalized learning based on the idea of having control over what is learned (Tobin, 1998). Learners want to have control over what they learn. With this purpose, they develop a personal learning environment (PLE). According to Atwell (2007), PLE is a collection of tools which are used for learning in daily life. PLEs provides opportunity to learner for creating meaningful integration of various learning tools and using these tools to learn in personalized environment within frame of specific objectives. PLEs are shaped with learner-centered approach by learners by using different set of tools and services. Instead of providing stable set of services and tools, PLEs give learners opportunity to choose among various services and tools according to need. Besides providing freedom of selection to learners, it also brings learners together within same social context by knowledge sharing and collaboration (Chatti et al., 2010). According to Ivanova (2009), there are two main requirements for creating this social network. These are providing sustainable value to learners and enabling continuous sharing of knowledge, experience and insight.

PLN has various descriptions such as "reciprocal learning systems" (Powerful Learning Practice, 2012), "online communities that allow the sharing of lesson plans, teaching strategies, and student work, as well as collaboration across grade levels and departments" (Flanigan, 2011), "vibrant, ever-changing groups of connections,"

(Crowley, 2014) and "the sum of all social capital and connections" (Couros, 2010). With taking all of these definitions into consideration, PLN is connecting people, books, platforms etc. in order to support ongoing learning which is generally related to professional work (Tobin, 1998). Tobin (1998) explained main idea behind the PLN as;

> ...learning doesn't take place just in training programs, but should be part of every employee's everyday activities. You learn every time you read a book or article, every time you observe how someone else is doing work similar to your own, every time you ask a question.

That is why, PLN can be defined as a continuous and multidirectional learning journey. PLN, also, can be defined as academic interactions of people who have meaningful and productive concurrence. People access interactions and sources to develop professionally through responsivity of PLNs. People integrate themselves in these learning networks through different ways of engagement according to transactional meaning so that they reshape the network and vice a versa.

Despite being different terms, the idea of PLN can be related to concept of PLE. As Couros (2010) explained, PLEs are about tools, services and physical connections side of the learning. Wilson, Liber, Johnson, Beauvoir, Sharples and Milligan (2006) explained that having PLE is core component of PLN. They stated that while PLEs are focusing on connections between learners, services and tools, PLNs are focusing on integrating experiences in different areas such as work, leisure time. PLNs are the social capital and connections included version of PLEs (Couros, 2010). In PLN, a learner create connection with other learners or resource of knowledge to learn desired topic. These connections between people, tools and services are informal. That is why, PLNs provide continuous and long-term learning rather than time or

course based learning (Wilson, 2008). This characteristics of continuity is the important part PLNs.

Every person establishes PLNs in their own unique way. According to Davis (2004), learning is an adaptation to constantly changing circumstances. In workplace, employees improve themselves with or without specific objectives by observing and talking with their colleagues who have experience and show success in the related areas. That is why, learning how people create and use PLNs will help to understand PLNs more deeply. PLNs provide new learning zones by creating new connections between different people and resources. With help of the new technological advances, creating new connections is easier through web connections so that people can interact to gain professional knowledge and emotional support from anyone and anywhere at any time (Hur & Brush, 2009; Trust, 2012; 2013). PLNs might be taken as similar to social media platforms. However, as Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat (2011) said PLNs are "set of nodes and links with affordances for learning". The difference between social media platforms and PLNs can be stated like this; while the former are tools to use communicate with others, the latter is a complex system which includes tools, platforms and people to support on-offline continuous learning.

Although there is growing field of academic research on PLNs, because of being more anecdotal, there were few studies on immediate, potential, and applied value of certain online communities and networks (Wenger et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Technology, 2014), there is still a significant gap in the literature about the value, effect and construction of PLNs and how they shape learning. According to Couros (2010), to do list of developing a personal learning network includes:

- "Immerse Yourself" by understanding how these tools work, how they can be used together, and how your students can utilize them for your own intended learning.
- "Learn to Read Social Media" because traditional search engines like Google are not currently ideal in order to reach valid knowledge to learn.
- "Strengthen Your PLN" by interaction with different people because social capital in PLNs are strengthened through various degrees and forms of interaction. Producing content or providing knowledge resources also strengthen your PLN.
- "Know Your Connections" because it will give people to comprehend backgrounds and skills of individuals in their PLN. By doing so, people can extend their PLNs.
- "PLNs Central to Learning" because if the community based on time or course, it will eventually die. However, PLN centered learning provides sustained and continuous learning for people.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this section, the methodology of the research will be explained. The methodology part composed of research design, research participants, data collection instrument, pilot study, data collection procedure, data analysis and research permission and ethical consideration.

3. 1 Research design

Qualitative research is based on the experiences of people by revealing people's way of interpreting their experiences and way of attributing meaning to these experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam & Simpson, 2001). The main focus of the qualitative researches is to reveal the perspective of participants. As Merriam and Simpson (2001) explained, the best way to reveal individuals' perspective is to understand their cumulative reality which is resulted from social interactions. Also, qualitative research, as Strauss and Corbin (1990) explained, a proper way to reveal insights of a phenomena such as thought processes, feelings and emotions.

Among qualitative research methodologies, phenomenology is selected as the most appropriate research methodology for data collection and analysis processes of the study because phenomenological research is a qualitative research method that focuses on comparing and contrasting the reflections of a homogenous group of people who have all experienced the same or similar events (Manning, 2013). It is the way of describing experiences of people based on philosophy and psychology (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Align with these descriptions, in order to gain insight into how the new hires in a corporate organization construct their PLN, what the components of the PLN are, and how PLN plays a role in learning and performing processes of entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires, phenomenology, qualitative research methodology, was used for the present study.

3.2 Research settings

Participants of the study are the employees of the corporate organization which is operating in telecommunication sector. Due to confidentiality issues, the organization was referred as Company A. This company has 5,000 employees who are placed under twelve main business function all around Turkey. Training activities of Company A are operated by the corporate academy which is a part of human resources department. Training needs of the company differs based on each business unit. In 2017, Company A hired nearly 200 new employees, who have maximum two years of experience, for different functions of the company. These new hires were trained through basic trainings which are orientation and functional training for technical knowledge. Also, each new hire had a mentor to adapt to the company during first two months.

3. 3 Research participants

The participant group of the study consisted of 20 persons who have all experienced the phenomenon. Target group of the research differed regarding age, gender, educational backgrounds and departments. The participant group included 10 (50%) male and 10 (50%) female new hires between the ages of 23-27 who work in the same corporate organization with the author of the thesis in Istanbul. Most of the

participants who have maximum 2 years of experience work in different departments of the corporate organization. The details of the demographic information are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' Demographics

Participant's Coded Name	Gender	Age	Educational Background		Work Experience		Used Social Media Platforms				
			Latest Educational Degree	Latest Graduated University Type	Month	Year	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Others
A	F	24	BA	Public	10	0	1	1	1	1	0
B	F	24	BA	Private	10	0	0	1	1	1	Snapchat
C	F	26	BA	Private	11	0	1	1	1	1	0
D	F	22	BA	Private	11	0	1	1	1	1	Medium Pinterest
E	F	23	BA	Public	11	0	1	1	1	1	0
F	F	25	BA	Private	11	0	1	0	1	1	0
G	F	25	BA	Public	11	0	0	1	1	1	0
H	M	26	BA	Private	11	0	0	1	1	1	0
J	M	26	BA	Public	11	0	0	1	1	1	0
K	F	25	BA	Private	11	0	1	1	1	1	0
L	M	27	BA	Public	11	0	1	1	1	1	0
M	F	23	BA	Public	11	0	0	1	1	1	0
N	M	25	BA	Public	10	0	1	1	1	1	0
P	M	26	BA	Public	11	0	1	1	1	1	0
R	M	27	MA	Private	0	2	1	1	1	1	0
S	F	22	BA	Private	11	0	1	1	1	1	0
T	M	27	BA	Private	11	0	1	1	1	1	Google+
V	M	27	BA	Public	0	2	1	1	1	1	0
W	M	24	BA	Public	19	0	1	1	1	1	0
Q	M	25	MA	Public	11	0	0	0	0	1	0

Age range of participants was between 22 and 27 years old with the average of 25. The total frequencies of the ages were shown in the Table 2. The table shows that 10% of the participants are 22 years old, 10% of the participants are 23 years old, 15% of the participants 24 are years old, 25% of the participants are 25 years old, 20% of the participants are 26 years old and 20% of the participants are 27 years old.

Table 2. Age Demographics of the Participants

Age	N	%
22	2	10
23	2	10
24	3	15
25	5	25
26	4	20
27	4	20
Total	20	100

Work experience of participants were between 11 – 24 months with the average of 13 months. The most experienced participant had 24 months of work experience while the least experienced participant had 10 months of work experience. As Table 3 shows 15% of participants had 10 months of work experience, 70% of participants had 11 months of work experience, 5% of participants had 19 months of work experience and 10% of participants had 24 months of work experience.

Table 3. Work Experience Demographics of the Participants

Months of Work Experience	N	%
10	3	15
11	14	70
19	1	5
24	2	10
Total	20	100

When the practitioners' educational background analyzed, it is seen that two participants had a master's degree and 18 participants had a bachelor degree. As educational backgrounds and working fields were taken into consideration, it is seen that participants were very diverse in terms of their work field and educational background.

In case of social media usage of participant group, demographic information shows that while all participants had LinkedIn account, 70% of participants had twitter account, 90% of participants had Facebook account, 95% of participants had Instagram account. These results indicate LinkedIn is the most preferred social media platform of participants. Then it is followed by Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Besides these, some participant stated that they preferred to use Snapchat, Medium, Pinterest and Google+ too as a social media platform.

Table 4. Social Media Usage Demographics of the Participants

Social Media Platforms	N	%
Twitter	14	70
Facebook	18	90
Instagram	19	95
LinkedIn	20	100
Others	3	15
Total	20	100

These participants were chosen among new hires of the corporate organization by purposeful and convenience sampling method which was used because of participants' convenient accessibility and proximity to the author of the thesis. Farrokhi and Mahmoudi-Hamidabad (2012) explained convenience sampling as a way of sampling the members of target population if they meet already determined criteria of the researcher align with the aim of the study such as availability at easy accessible time.

Participation status was based on the volunteering of the participants. Interviews hold outside the workplace by planning face-to-face interviews with those who agree to take part in the research. For the confidentiality issues, each participant was referred by code names. Responses were taken from 20 participants included in the data analysis. Participants learned about informal learning and were aware of how the different platforms which they use as habits are located in their lives as a source of information. In addition, they learned the concept of PLN and gained awareness about it. By doing so, participants realized that they can increase their expertise in their field by using their personal learning networks.

3. 4 Data collection instruments

Data collection began after the Boğaziçi University- INAREK/SBB Ethics Sub-Committee reviewed and approved the study and data collection tools (Appendix A). Then written consent (Appendix C) was obtained from participants. At the planned interview session data was gathered, first, by demographic information form which was be filled in by participants before interviews. In these forms; gender, age, education history, work experience and existence of social media accounts are the expected information from the participants. The researcher used the interviews as a

tool to collect deeper and richer perspective regarding the phenomenon. However, due to be new research era, there were only few existed interview questionnaires that could be used in this study. Through getting approval from owner of the suitable interview protocol, data collection tool of the study was selected (Appendix B). Thus, data was collected using an interview protocol which was adapted from previous research studies (Manning, 2013) that allow the participant to reflect on and explain his or her personal experience to collect a deeper, richer perspective on the phenomenon. Interviews of participants were done using the interview questionnaire (Appendix F) that consisted of seven open-ended questions. The interview questionnaire was developed by the Manning (2013) and tested during the pilot study regarding validity and reliability. Updated version of the interview questionnaire after pilot study were reviewed by a colleague of the researcher, and additional modifications were provided by thesis advisor. The questionnaire was finalized according to all of the issues that originated from reviews in order to provide relevant data.

3. 5 Pilot study

Before the actual data collection process, the pilot study was conducted in order to get insights about the research design. The pilot study was conducted with three participants. These participants had similar demographic features of participant group of the study. All of them had max two years of work experience. Their ages were between 24-27 years old. Also, they were employees of Company A. The real aim beneath the pilot study was to investigate whether interview questions are open, understandable and clear for the participants and the interview protocol is suitable and comprehensive. Also, planned interview places were checked whether these

places are appropriate for the intended flow. That is why, for interviews of the pilot study, the researcher chose different interview settings such as cafes and meeting rooms in the company in order to pick the most suitable ones for actual data collection procedure.

During these interviews, it was realized that there was a need for detailed explanation of the terminology which is used in the interview questions. In accordance with this realization, interview questions revised. These revisions made based on definition of unclear terms which were used in the first version of the interview questions. For example, in the first version of interview questions personal learning network term was used frequently. In the revised version, the researcher used learning resources and ways of learning instead of personal learning network. In the actual data collection process, these revised interview questions were used (Appendix F).

At the same time, after the pilot study, it was decided that the meeting rooms in the Company A were the most suitable to hold these interviews in accordance with feedbacks of participants. As a result, findings of the pilot study helped researcher to increase chance to reach intended success at the end of the study.

3. 6 Data collection procedure

This qualitative study examined how the new hires in a corporate organization construct their PLN, what the components of the PLN are and how PLN plays role in learning and performing processes of entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires. In order to do this, phenomenology was selected as the most appropriate research methodology for data collection and analysis processes of the study.

The researcher selected 20 participants who had all experienced the phenomenon. The participant group consisted of male and female new hires between the ages of 23-27 who works in the same corporate organization with the author of the thesis. These participants were chosen among new hires of the corporate organization by purposeful and convenience sampling method which was used because of participants' convenient accessibility and proximity to the author of the thesis. Interviews hold after planning with those who accept to be included in the study. At the planned interview session, first consent forms and demographic information forms were filled in by the participants before the interviews. The data was collected using an interview protocol which was adapted from previous research studies (Manning, 2013) that allow the participant to reflect on and explain his or her personal experience to collect a deeper, richer perspective on the phenomenon.

3. 7 Data analysis

In the data analysis part, the researcher analyzed the collected data looking for significant statements that explains how the participants experienced the phenomenon. As a beginning for analysis, responses from the participants were transcribed. Then the analysis process continued in six steps, as it is suggested by Smith et al. (2009). First, all transcripts were read and listened to be able to have comprehensive knowledge of the data. In the second steps, in order to gain insight into perspective of participants about the phenomenon, the researcher added descriptive comments which include initial notes and significant quotes. Then, for the third step, responses were coded to create main themes which indicate answers of the research questions with the help of previous descriptive comments. In fourth and fifth steps, the researcher tried to reveal connections and patterns in each responses

of the participants by codes in order to create common themes. At the final step of the analysis, researcher created patterns and themes among responses of the all participants. By concluding this process, the structural and contextual descriptions of perspective of the participant who experienced the phenomenon revealed (Creswell, 2013). At the end of the analysis, researcher wrote the description of the phenomenon by looking at the common experience of the participants. Also, recommendations were made to develop new strategies for non-formal learning which already takes place in corporate organizations by using this description of the phenomenon.

3. 8 Research permission and ethical consideration

In order to avoid any risks or problems, the participants are informed and protected through the thesis process. The ethical treatment of the participants' data was considered throughout the design and continuum of the study. Data collection will only begin after the Boğaziçi University- INAREK/SBB Ethics Sub-Committee reviewed and approved the study and data collection tools (Appendix A).

In order to increase credibility and trustworthiness of the study, peer review which is one of the five ways suggested by Creswell (2013) used in both in revision process of the interview questions and review process of the codes. A colleague of the researcher check the interview questions after revisions and review codes.

During all the phases of the study, the participants informed about their options to continue or withdraw from the study. All participation is strictly based on a voluntary basis. The consent form includes an introduction that clearly states the purpose for the survey. The participants are able to opt out at any time by leaving the survey. Incomplete surveys are not included in the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents collected information related to research questions. The findings from data analysis are presented within major themes in accordance with the research questions. The collected data analyzed under the main focus of how new hires create their PLNs.

In order to understand perspective of new hires on the personal learning networks, interviews are done. The responses of the participants are translated to English while quoting. Also, due to ethical issues, names of the participants are coded. The combination of these data created deeper understanding of the PLNs of new hires.

In this part, each interview questions and their main themes of findings, which were created by coding findings from responses to each interview questions, are positioned under related research questions. Each research questions are discussed within the scope of related interview questions. Besides this, themes and sub-themes presented with their frequencies.

Research Question 1: How do new hires create their Personal Learning Networks?

In order to answer research question 1, responses from related interview questions are combined and main themes are created from these responses. These interview questions, related to research question 1, are as below.

- Interview Question 1: What are the things you learned about your work at this stage of your life?

- Interview Question 1a: How do you learn new things? Which resources do you use to learn them?
- Interview Question 2: What are your sources of information that you used to learn? How would your preferred five resources be if you put them in order?
- Interview Question 3: What activities did you use to learn something in the last week and what are your sources of information that you use? Describe how you plan your learning process as time and structure.
- Interview Question 3a: Is your access to knowledge based on coincidence or need?
- Interview Question 3c: Do you spare some time for researching and learning?

Responses relating how new hires create their Personal Learning Networks has been gathered through these interview questions and combined. These combined responses coded. Then codes come together around two main themes which are learning resources and ways of learning. Table 5 indicates learning resources which are main parts of personal learning networks of new hires and their frequencies.

As it seen in Table 5, most of the participants stated that they frequently use internet, social media platforms and their colleagues as their source of information. Besides, they stated that they mostly use books, magazines, existing data or documents and their friends as resource. Although most of the participants said that they frequently use internet, social media platforms and their colleagues as their source of information, each participants' preference order of source of information is different from each other. Table 6 indicates participants' preference order of source of information.

Table 5. Frequency Table of Learning Resources Theme

Sub-Themes	# of participants mentioned	%
Internet	15	75
Social Media Platforms	13	65
Colleagues	12	60
Books & Magazines	9	45
Professionals	7	35
Existing data and documents	5	25
Friends	4	20
Conferences	3	15
Blogs & Forums	2	10
TV	2	10
Learning Platforms	2	10
Family	2	10
Digital Media	2	10
Managers	1	5
Mentors	1	5
Insight	1	5
Personal Experience	1	5
Business Partner	1	5
Observation	1	5
Total	20	100

As it seen in Table 6, 35% of participants chose their colleagues as primary source of information. Also, 35% of participants prefer internet as their primary source of information. Besides these, rest of the participants use books, magazines, their friends, professionals and their managers as primary source of information. While 57,1% of participants who chose their colleagues as primary source of information prefer internet as secondary source of information, a small percentage of these people, only 28,6% of participants who chose internet as primary source of information, prefer their colleagues as secondary source of information. Other most preferred secondary sources of information are existing data or documents, professionals and social media platforms.

Table 6. Preference Order Table of Learning Resources

Participant's Coded Name	Order of Preferred Learning Resources				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
A	Colleagues	Existing data and documents	Conferences	Social Media Platforms	Family
B	Internet	Friends	Insight	TV	
C	Colleagues	Existing data and documents	Internet	Social Media Platforms	Books & Magazines
D	Colleagues	Internet	Professionals	Books & Magazines	
E	Books & Magazines	Conferences	Friends	TV	Social Media Platforms
F	Colleagues	Internet	Social Media Platforms	Conferences	
G	Internet	Books & Magazines	Social Media Platforms	Mentors	
H	Internet	Learning Platforms	Digital Media	Professionals	
J	Colleagues	Internet	Digital Media	Existing data and documents	Business Partners
K	Internet	Colleagues	Social Media Platforms	Blogs & Forums	Existing data and documents
L	Friends	Professionals	Books & Magazines	Internet	Social Media Platforms
M	Colleagues	Internet	Social Media Platforms		
N	Books & Magazines	Professionals	Personal Experience	Observations	Social Media Platforms
P	Internet	Existing data and documents	Colleagues		
R	Professionals	Internet	Colleagues	Blogs & Forums	Books & Magazines
S	Managers	Colleagues	Learning Platforms	Social Media Platforms	
T	Internet	Social Media Platforms	Professionals		
V	Colleagues	Social Media Platforms			
W	Internet	Colleagues	Books & Magazines	Family	Friends
Q	Professionals	Internet	Social Media Platforms	Books & Magazines	

Some participants said that it is hard to say five source of information in these days other than internet and colleagues.

> First of all, I ask Google, then I look at my existing notes. After that, if I still could not find the answer, I ask my friends. I believe that, in these days when you can find everything online, you do not have to ask anyone else (Participant P).

> If topic which I am going to search is related to work, first I can ask my friend where to search it, or instead of asking where to search, I ask him directly what I am going to search. So basically, first I ask my friend; then I ask Google. I do not prefer any other source right now (Participant M)

The other main theme for research question 1 is ways of learning. Table 7 presents participants' ways of learning in other words participants' ways of using personal learning networks. As it shown in Table 7, most of participants chose working on a project as a primary way of learning. During the interviews, employees emphasized that they learn while executing their daily role and responsibilities. Thus, on the job experiences emerged as one of the most used way when learning new things or learning things better.

Table 7. Participants' Ways of Learning

Sub-Themes	# of participants mentioned	%
Working on projects	18	90
On the job experiences	16	80
Asking questions to colleagues	15	75
Feedbacks	15	75
Searching in the internet	15	75
Consulting experienced people	11	55
Reading books & magazines	9	45
Exploration	6	30
Reviewing existing data & documents	5	25
Participating in training programs & conferences	3	15
Total	20	100

Besides these, asking questions to colleagues, feedbacks and searching in the internet emerged as popular ways of learning. These results show consistency with popular learning resources of new hires which are colleagues and internet. However, responses of related interview questions also revealed that although participants attended to trainings related to their fields when they got hired, they did not see participating training programs as an efficient way of learning which will support their professional development.

Some of the participants stated their idea on this issue like these:

> I am not a person who can, personally, hold theoretical knowledge in my memory. Even if I have any mathematical problem, first I have to do something in order to solve it. That is why, first I have to solve a ridiculous example so that I can actually understand it. So, in fact, by actually experiencing it, theoretical information can be very useful in real life as well. Main point is that it is a much more reasonable way to see how the flow of work progresses within itself in order to learn how to do it (Participant N)

> The information taught in the school is theoretical knowledge. It is not possible to just memorize these things, get hired and be successful. I do not think that most of the roles and responsibilities that our jobs required are taught in trainings. What I am saying is that not the trainings we took when we first got hired, but actually doing the job taught us the real job (Participant T).

To conclude, new hires construct their learning network mostly by using their colleagues and internet. They prefer to use their personal learning networks as a most efficient way to meet the learning needs of their roles and responsibilities by working on a project or by on the job experiences.

Research Question 2: What influences new hires in their choices of personal learning network resources?

In order to answer research question 2, responses from related interview questions are combined and main themes are created from these responses. These interview questions, related to research question 2, are as below.

- Interview Question 1b: What are your reasons for choosing your family / colleagues / internet / social media / academic writing as a source of information?
- Interview Question 3b: If your access to information is based on need, where does this need come from?
- Interview Question 5: When you connect to others or when you read things on the internet, what factors influence how you make judgments about the worth of the contribution?
- Interview Question 6: Do you think that components of your personal learning network change as you gain experience in your profession?

Responses relating what influences new hires in their choices of personal learning network resources has been gathered through these interview questions and combined. These combined responses coded. Then codes come together around two main themes which are individual factors and contextual factors.

In corporate organizations, new hires create their personal learning networks according to context of and their individual features. In case of contextual factors, as it shown in the Table 8, the most influential ones are experience level of colleagues within scope of related field, and structure of targeted project. These factors that influence construction of personal learning networks can affect construction process negatively or positively. For example, if a workplace is not available to use desired

learning resources while performing roles and responsibilities, new hires would change their learning resources or their way of learnings.

Table 8. Contextual Factors Influencing PLNs

Contextual Factors	# of participants mentioned	%
Experience Level of Colleagues	19	95
Structure of Project	18	90
Attitude of Managers/Responsible Person	14	70
Availability of Resources	11	55
Attitude of Colleagues	9	45
Total	20	100

Some of the participants stated their idea on this issue like these:

> From experience… So if this is something I have never done. I sit down and investigate it from scratch.. what I want in the project, what I need to do and how the project works. I try to learn these from experience. So, I ask my manager, teammate or expert of the related project (Participant H).

In case of individual factors, there are other sub-themes like individual interest and educational background. Table 9 presents details of individual factors which influence the construction of new hires' personal learning networks. As it presented in the table, the most influential individual factors are like to explore and characteristics of person which are being open to communication, being determined and having entrepreneurial spirit. These factors also have a power to influence construction of personal learning networks in a positive or negative way. During interviews participants emphasized that due to positive or negative effects of these individual factors, they add a learning resources to their personal learning network and they change their way of learning.

Table 9. Individual Factors Influencing PLNs

Individual Factors	# of participants mentioned	%
Like to Explore	15	75
Characteristics of Person	13	65
Like to Read	11	55
Educational Background	9	45
Individual Interest	7	35
Total	20	100

Some participants expressed their ideas on individual factors which effects PLNs like below.

> Normally I actually do a history mastery. That is why, I have too many books in my life. As I learn something about history, I have to work with printed resources in a library or archive. Even if it is digital versions of these articles or books, in the end I always have to stick to a library and ProQuest, which provides these library sub-structures. But if it is related to my personal development or business related things, I generally use internet or social media (Participant II).

A male participant presented his individual factors which effect his PLN like below.

> I am currently working on the cinema, trying to learn the details about the cinema and the information I do not know about it. Apart from that, I have a habit of reading books regularly, but recently I have been doing it irregularly. I have my own book list. I go through it in order. I definitely take time to read every day (Participant N).

A female participant reasoned her PLN construction like below.

> Because I see learning things as a process of self-completion. Everything I learn shows me how ignorant I am, but at the same time I complete my personality. I go under too much burden. I think too much. I can see the world with different perspectives. I believe that I have begun to get rid of my own troubles and perceive the world with a general consciousness (Participant E).

As a result, new hires shape their personal learning networks according to contextual and individual factors. A person's interest, educational background, structure of targeted project, experience level of colleagues or attitude of manager can cause to add or extract a component to personal learning networks.

Research Question 3: How do personal learning networks contributes to entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires?

In order to answer research question 3, responses from related interview questions are combined and main themes are created from these responses. These interview questions, related to research question 3, are as below.

- Interview Question 4: Think about a project that required you to work outside your experience and comfort zone of tools, techniques, or approaches. Walk me through how you approached the learning that you needed to go through to meet this challenge.
- Interview Question 4a: What technologies did you use and why?
- Interview Question 4b: To whom did you reach out for help and why?
- Interview Question 6: Do you think that components of your personal learning network change as you gain experience in your profession?
- Interview Question 7: Have you received any certification or university diploma related to the field you are working in?
- Interview Question 7a: How do you relate what you learn in your business life and what you learn in school life?
- Interview Question 7b: If you do not, how do you plan to improve yourself?

Responses relating how personal learning networks contributes to entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires has been gathered through these interview

questions and combined. These combined responses coded. Then codes come together around two main themes which are technical knowledge and soft skills.

Most of the participants mentioned in their interview both these themes, their importance in business life and also how these improves when you gain experience. A participant expressed effects of PLN on soft skills like below.

> The most important thing I learned related to my work is communication. In fact, it must be clear to me how I should be communicating with people or what I expect from the opposite person. I think it's important if you're working in a corporate company. Another thing that I have learned is the importance of gaining experience (Participant K).

Another participant expressed effects of PLN on technical knowledge like below.

> Things I learned are generally related to technical part of my job. I learned general technical information about the heating, cooling, ventilation, fire installation related to the air conditioning branch which is one of the lower branches of mechanical engineering (Participant J).

Besides these, other participants stated that while learning technical knowledge of their job, they gained soft skills with the help of their PLNs.

> I did not know anything at first, I was trying to get something from everybody. As you said, after observing your mistakes and making mistakes, you make up your own method. So you find a way, you discover, you try to do your own thing over it. In time, you start asking questions to anyone, and then you try to take care of your business by yourself. When I am in very tight situation, I communicate with my manager so that, just in case, he becomes aware of it, and then I try to solve it with him. So, in fact, after a while, all the jobs are being restricted because of the fact that the job is a routine, you are starting to act on what you already know (Participant N).

> To be able to do this job is to learn the basic processes of the business. In time you learn what other experienced friends are doing. There is also a dimension of communication in business, dimensions of human management and metrics which are required by business. To summarize, at first you are creating a backbone of your work. You learn what you need to know to do this job (Participant A).

It is emerged in the interviews that professionality in the business increase through gaining technical knowledge and soft skills like communication skills and time management. Most of the participants expressed that while learning technical know-how of the work and gaining experience, you start to gain required soft skills by accomplishing your role and responsibilities. The process itself teaches you how to be an expert of your field within the concept of technical knowledge and soft skills. At first, new hires' construct their personal learning networks based on contextual and individual factors. Then, by using this network, they learn how to do their job and how to be expert of it. In time, this experience lead them to change structure of their personal learning network and their strategy of approaching projects.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings of the research are summarized. Then, findings are discussed within the context of research questions of the study and related literature. Besides these, limitations of the study are stated and recommendations for organizations, new hires and further studies are presented.

5.1 Discussion

The purpose of the study was to understand how the new hires in a corporate organization construct their PLN, what the components of the PLN are and how PLN plays a role in learning and performing processes of entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires in order to meet their need of learning. In particular, the study explored how new hires learn required knowledge and skills to work in their profession, and what their sources of information are. With using qualitative research method, the study conducted through semi-structured interviews with 20 new hires within context of telecommunication sector. The collected data processed with content analysis method.

The participant group of the study consist of 10 females and 10 males whose ages between 22 and 27 with the average of 25. In terms of educational background, most of the participant had bachelor degree in different areas. Beside these, work experience of participants were between 11 – 24 months with the average of 13 months. In case of social media usage of participant group, results revealed that shows that while all participants had LinkedIn account, 70% of participants had twitter account, 90% of participants had Facebook account, 95% of participants had

Instagram account. These results indicate social media usage is quite popular among new hires within context of telecommunication sector. Related literature indicates that high usage rate of social media platforms changes the way that people use to learn (CARA Group, 2011).

In the present study, with the first research question, the researcher aimed to reveal how new hires create their Personal Learning Networks. In order to reach that aim, the researcher investigated and presented new hires' experiences with semi-structured interview questions. First of all, the researcher investigated how new hires learn, which will reveal how new hires create their Personal Learning Network. During interviews, although interviewees learn everything since they born, they had a hard time to answer questions like how they learn or which tools they use while learning. Because of occurring spontaneously with or without formal education, being unscheduled and occurring everywhere in life and at every moment, participants cannot realize that they are learning informally without specifically focusing on it. This revealed that new hires learn informally. This situation also stated in the literature too like new hires' 80% of learning happens informally through using coaching, mentoring or social learning (Beckerman et al., 2006; Yeo, 2008).

Within the context of responses to related interview questions to first research question, two main themes emerged which are learning resources and ways of learning. The findings of the study showed that most preferred learning resources of new hires' are colleagues and internet, and most preferred ways of learnings are working on projects and gaining on the job experiences. Although most of the participants said that they frequently use internet, social media platforms and their colleagues as their source of information, each participants' preference order of

source of information is different from each other. The findings of the study verified the previous findings in the literature which stated that there has not been any defined preference order available for any specific profession (Daly, 1967; Akyıldız, 1991; O'Connor, 2004). None of the practitioners in the study mentioned that they were provided with a defined systematic program for knowledge and skills acquisition for their profession apart from general orientation trainings. Rather, it was appeared that employees mostly relied on their own way learnings and their own learning resources in the workplace in order to develop their professional expertise. This was also verified through the findings of the previous studies in the literature suggesting that the majority of professional learning occur informally in the workplace (Garrick, 1998, Valkevaara, 2002, Collin, 2002, Frei, 2007, Eraut, 2007, Altay, 2007).

Özen (2011) stated that informal learning is a process in which the individual makes choices in the learning process, the individual is in complete control, the written materials are read and the real or virtual people are contacted. The importance of information and communication technologies has also been emphasized. Aratemur (2009) reported that, even though people source was stated as one of learning resources, participants in the study did not emphasize learning through networking with other people who were in the profession. However, in the present study, colleagues emerged as one of the most popular learning resources. This difference can be a result of difference between characteristics of participant groups of each study because of work experience level of the participants. In Alakurt's (2015) study, it is reported that 100 Informatics Teaching (IT) teachers working in various educational institutions of a non-governmental organization had informal learning behaviors in their work environment. In the study, Continuous

Learning Questionnaire which is developed by Lohman (2005) was adapted to Turkish used. According to the results obtained, IT teachers were found to be searching the internet most frequently as a learning activity. This result show similarities with the result of new hires of corporate organization. It is revealed that adult learners learn more through self-directed learning. Through this learning, learners choose their own learning objectives, goals and methods and put them into practice. By bringing all these factors together, they create their Personal Learning Networks. As a result, awareness of individual learners increases, they can fulfill the requirements of the modern digital society and their profession, which may be easier to adapt to changing workplace conditions and requirements with economic changes.

In the present study, with the second research question, the researcher aimed to reveal what influences new hires in their choices of personal learning network resources. In order to reach that aim, the researcher investigated reasons beneath new hires' choices of learning resources and ways of learning, basis of learning needs and judgement criteria regarding validity and reliability of learning resources. New hires had their own individual preferences and directions for their learning and also they learned in a social context so their learning experiences were exposed to some influencing factors for informal learning. Within the context of responses to related interview questions to second research question, these factors classified as individual factors and contextual factors. The findings of the study showed that, in case of contextual factors, the most influential ones are experience level of colleagues within scope of related field, and structure of targeted project. In case of individual factors, the most influential ones are individual interest and educational background.

All of these factors which had an impact on construction of Personal Learning Networks, because of their effect on informal learning experiences of new

hires, could show their effect in a positive or negative way. In other words, if new hires were willing to learn, curious, and self-confident, if they had a related educational background, if there were positive attitudes towards colleagues or managers, if the context of their work allowed new hires to spare time for learning, if there was access to learning resources and if t attitude of organization towards training was supportive, then all these individual and contextual factors became supporters of Personal Learning Network. Otherwise, they turned into obstacles for both constructing Personal Learning Networks and learning. For example, if a learning resources like existing data and documents provide meaningful context for learning, new hires would include this learning resources in their personal learning networks. On the other hand, if a colleague is not experienced enough in targeted project, new hires would not include this colleague in their personal learning networks.

In a study by Lohman (2005), 318 public teachers and Human Resources Department (HRD) specialists have investigated in case of personal and environmental factors that affect their current workplace learning. The data was collected with the Informal Learning Questionnaire developed by him in 2005. According to the results, HRD specialists prefer independent learning activities while teachers prefer interactive informal learning activities. For both groups, being away from their colleagues' workplaces and lack of time for learning were found as environmental factors affecting their workplace learning. In addition, HRD specialists have indicated that environmental factors such as lack of supportive organization culture, reluctance of others, and lack of access to subject experts are also effective, while teachers have indicated that importance of monetary rewards on informal learning. Self-efficacy, desire to learn, interest in the profession, perception

of professional skills, protective personality traits and aggressive personality traits were emerged as individual factors affecting informal learning at the workplace.

One of the most important features of the Personal Learning Networks is related with the validity and reliability of learning resources while new hires developing their professional expertise. As it stated in the findings, there are no defined learning route for new hires and they mostly learn informally. At that point, there emerge some concerns regarding the quality of Personal Learning Networks and its construction.

In case of reliability and validity of learning resources, participants stated that their evaluation criteria differs according to basis of learning. They stated that if it is related to work project or profession, they choose learning resources with the help of their background information about which resources is valid and reliable. Thus, if it is work related issue, they search it on related forums or sites that they used since beginning of their activity in the profession. However, if it is not work related issue or it based on personal interest, they decide validity and reliability of the resources by insight or contrasting the information about the issue on different resources. According to context and basis of the learning, validity and reliability evaluation criteria of learning resources change. Thus, trustworthiness of the learning resources can be positioned under contextual or individual factors by looking at context and basis of the learning.

As a result of both previous findings in the literature and findings of the present study, it is considered important to be aware of the contextual factors in the workplace for facilitating construction of Personal Learning Network and informal learning experiences of all employees, especially new hires, for their professional developments. Although, it would be hard to control individual factors of the

participants, organizations can control contextual factors such as providing a better learning environment by giving necessary recognition, guidance and support.

In the present study, with the third research question, the researcher aimed to reveal how personal learning networks contributes to entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires. In order to reach that aim, the researcher investigated new hires in case of how they act when they are out of their comfort zone within context of work projects and when they change their learning resources, their way of learning or components of their Personal Learning Networks. Also, the researcher investigated relation between educational background of new hires and their workplace learning. Within the context of responses to related interview questions to third research question, contribution of personal learning networks to new hires entitles roles and responsibilities classified under two categories which are technical knowledge and soft skills. The findings of the study showed that, professional expertise in every field is required to have enough technical knowledge and good soft skills like communication and presentation skills. While technical knowledge was identified as a need for performing entitled responsibilities of profession, soft skills was identified as a requirement for becoming an effective employee in the organization. The process itself teaches you how to be an expert of your field within the concept of technical knowledge and soft skills. The new hires stated that, in corporate organizations, it seemed that soft skills was perceived as significant as technical knowledge in the field and even if more important than technical knowledge because of organizational culture.

As a result of the study, there was difference between the new hires in their evaluation of components of their Personal Learning Networks. At the very beginning, new hires focused more on institutional support and formal credentials of

the colleagues to help them make their decisions about who to place in their Personal Learning Networks. After gaining experience, they tended to focus less on these contextual factors like formal credentials and, instead, they focused on their insights and experiences while constructing their Personal Learning Networks. In workplace, employees improve themselves with or without specific objectives by observing and talking with their colleagues who have experience and show success in the related areas. This data shows that every person establishes PLNs in their own unique way and every person can change their PLNs as they want because, as Davis (2004) stated, learning is an adaptation to constantly changing circumstances.

The results of the present study indicated that formal training is not enough to keep up rapid knowledge changes which leads new hires to learn through different learning resources and different learning ways. Lin and Lee (2014) also draw attention to the importance of informal learning in practice. It has been expressed that informal learning provides opportunities for individuals to keep pace with the changing social structure of institutions as a result of technological developments, with continuous learning and developing skills opportunities. As Couros (2010) stated too, by being a complex system which includes tools, platforms and people to support on-offline continuous learning, personal learning networks become the desired solution for new hires' professional developments.

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to understand how the new hires in a corporate organization construct their PLN, what the components of the PLN are and how PLN plays a role in learning and performing processes of entitled roles and responsibilities of new hires in order to meet their need of learning. Studies carried out in Turkey and

abroad have been examined and similar and different aspects of these studies and the present study had been put discussed. As a result, it has been determined that as a consequence of living in the age of information all institutions that want to gain competitive advantage in the labor force market have increased their expectations from employees and those who want to work. At this point, the need for complex system which will meet every learning needs of employees especially new hires, emerged. Because they realize that the knowledge, skills and competences gained in formal educational institutions are not sufficient to meet these expectations. Personal Learning Networks become the solution for new hires' searching, by being a complex system which includes tools, platforms and people to support on-offline continuous learning. With using semi-structured interview questions, this study analyzed new hires' construction of personal learning networks. As a result of these content analysis, colleagues, internet and social media platforms emerged as most preferred learning resources. Also collected data shows that every person establishes PLNs in their own unique way and every person can change their PLNs as they want to adapt constantly changing circumstances. In case of using personal learning networks, most of the participants chose working on a project as a primary way of learning when learning new things or learning things better. On the other hand, results indicated that there were individual and contextual factors which influence construction of PLNs in a negative or positive way. After construction of Personal Learning Networks, although it can change to adapt changing circumstances, it contributes to new hires' roles and responsibilities by teaching how to be an expert of your field within the concept of technical knowledge and soft skills. Besides these, one of the important results of the study is realizing that most of the people learn without realizing how they do it. However, being aware of this will increase

efficiency of the learning in case of time, effort and cost. At that point, the present study helped people to realize how they learn, which way they should follow to learn effectively and how they empower their work performance with using PLNs.

All in all, from the general perspective, in Turkey, as in European countries, the quantity and the quality of studies can be increased by paying attention to informal learning. These studies can be carried out not only theoretically, but also practically too. These studies can be done not only based on economics, as many of the studies carried out abroad are, but also with a humanist point of view. That is to say, studies should be carried out not only to emphasize informal learning at workplace but to show the importance and necessity of informal learning at every moment of life and everywhere. Thus, personal learning networks will achieve its real purpose. Because learning can take place in every part of the person's life.

5.3 Limitations

One of the most important limitation for this study was selecting all participants from the same company. This study could be conducted with different participant group in various sectors. Also, these new hires were employees of same company. In order to get more generalized results, it could be conducted with more people who works in different companies in same the sector.

The other important limitation is limited permission to reveal participants work related demographics. It would be more meaningful, if we can publish work units of participants. Also, doing interviews related to their work maybe cause participants to hold themselves back in case of giving detailed answers during interviews.

5.4 Recommendations

After reviewing results of the present study about how people are currently approaching personal learning networks and informal learning, there are some significant recommendations not only for organizations, but also for new hires and for further studies are presented.

5.4.1 Recommendations for organizations

The need to keep up constant changes in the trends with little cost and more efficiency leads organizations to find new and better training solutions. Also, broad general learning solutions fails to reach intended learning goals regarding specific roles. With recent focus on personalized learning, organizations aim to embed learning into work process rather than formal training programs. Only way to reach this aim is integrating learning tools, people, learning platforms and learning resources into daily life through learning networks to support online and offline continuous learning. With the creation of Personal Learning Networks, knowledge distributed through learning networks among components of the network. Based on this developments, organizations can create learning journeys based on their employees learning preferences. When these preferences come together various components of learning networks are emerged. Organizations can use these different components to design personalized networks for each role in an organization through Personal Learning Networks. Because utilizing unique training programs which are designed for specific roles can help employees learn their role more quickly and accurately.

In order to support knowledge creation of their employees, organizations should spend more time and energy to create learning organization. Every person

already have their own way tools and resources to learn. Supporting employees' personal learning networks will help to increase strength of being learning organization. One of the first steps should be knowing needs of the employees because it is important to meet learning at the moment of the need. Understanding roles and responsibilities and offering significant solutions based on these will ensure learners success. That is why, by taking key employee characteristics into considerations, human resources departments should offer learning options which will cover needs of employees. HRD experts can also make recommendations for organizations future learning strategies based on these needs.

Also, organizations should pay special attention to new hires. Every new hires with or without experience start work with the need of safe environment which supports them to learn by doing. Just learning technical knowledge without any chance to put them in practice decreases ability of new hires to learn their entitled roles and responsibilities. Also, it affect their performances in a negative way. That's why, providing learning by doing opportunities to new hires is important.

5.4.2 Recommendations for new hires

The main conclusion of the present study was that majority of the workplace learning in corporate organizations occurs informally. There is unavailability of training programs for new hires to acquire required technical knowledge and soft skills before or during work. That is why, new hires mostly rely on their informal learning experiences which they got through their personal learning networks. At that point, some concerns emerge regarding the quality of their professional development. In order to prove quality of their professional development, new hires should attend certificate programs, at least for quality of their technical knowledge.

In case of informal learning, newly hired participants of the study stated that they construct their personal learning networks mainly with colleagues, internet and social media platforms based on their interests or based on requirements of their profession. Because of being newly hired employee, they emphasized the difficulties of having too much to learn. Also, they stated that, with the increasing amount of knowledge creation, it is hard to keep up trends in their profession even though they use social media platforms actively. At that point, using personalized platforms which review every social media platform and internet for defined specific topics, will help them to be updated about recent changes in their field. Adding tools that combine defined field specific technical knowledge and soft skills to personal learning networks of new hires will help their professional development in a positive way.

5.4.3 Recommendations for further studies

First of all, for further studies, there are several opportunities to re-do this study by addressing some of the limitations. For example, this study can be conducted with different participant group from various sectors. With this cross sectoral study, more effective corporate training programs that can be implemented in different sectors, would be designed. With implementation of this program, another study can be done to investigate effect of PLN on learning.

From another point of view, in order to get more generalized results for telecommunication sector, same study can be conducted with more people who works in different companies which operate in the same sector.

Besides these, analysis of the results of present study can be done within the context of gender, age, educational background and work experience in order to present more detailed, conducted and meaningful results.

As another suggestion, detailed quantitative part can be added before interviews to analyze responses to interview questions in a more meaningful way. Investigating reasons beneath responses in quantitative part could reveal more accurate deeper insights regarding construction of personal learning networks.

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL OF BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY- INAREK/SBB ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu

Sayı: 2017-79

21 Aralık 2017

Rukiye Bektaş
Eğitim Bilimleri

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Kişisel Öğrenme Ağı Oluşumu: İşe Yeni Girenlerin Bakış Açısı" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2017/78 sayılı başvuru İNAREK/SBB Etik Alt Kurulu tarafından 21 Aralık 2017 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Doç. Dr. Gül Sosay

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

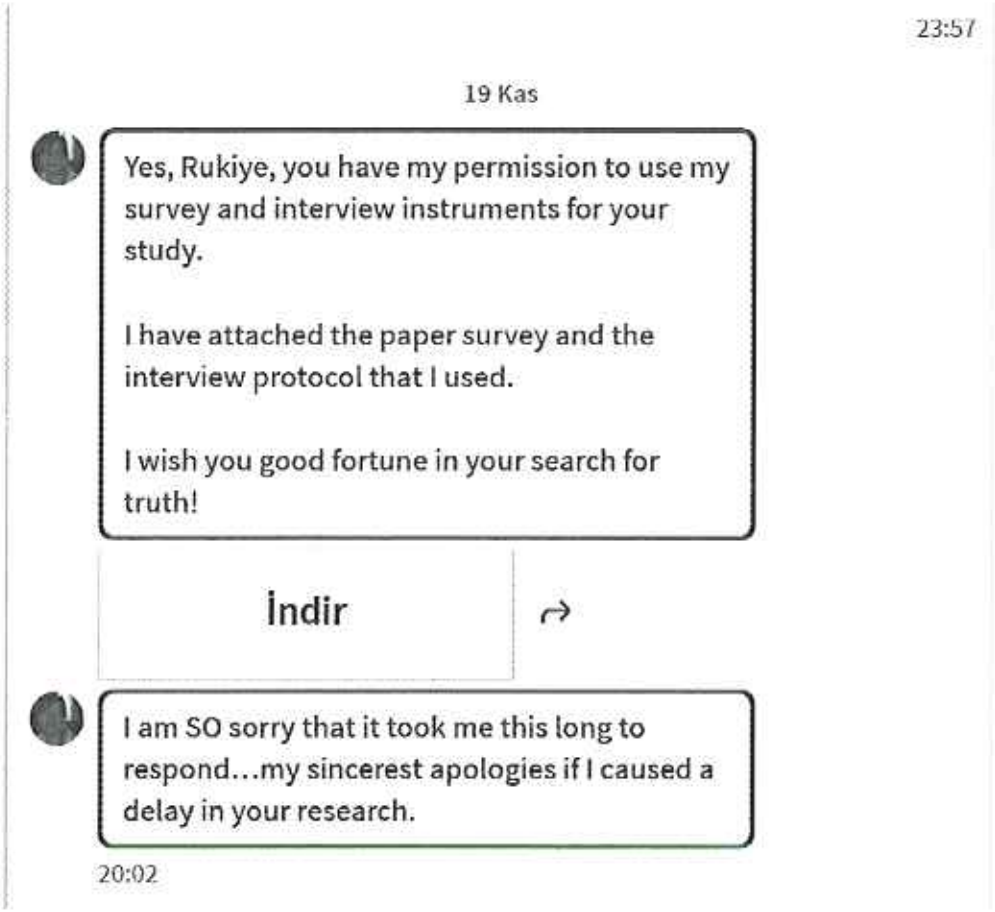
Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

Yrd. Doç. Dr. İnci Ayhan

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mehmet Nafi Artemel

APPENDIX B

APPROVAL OF CHRISTIN MANNING



APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

KATILIMCI BİLGİ VE ONAM FORMU

Araştırmayı destekleyen kurum: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Araştırmanın adı: Kişisel Öğrenme Ağı Oluşumu: İşe Yeni Girenlerin Bakış Açısı

Proje Yürütücüsü: Doç. Dr. Fatma Nevra Seggie

E-mail adresi: nevra.seggie@boun.edu.tr

Telefonu: 0212 359 4613

Araştırmacının adı: Rukiye Bektaş

E-mail adresi: rukiye.bektas14@gmail.com

Telefonu: 0538 778 5978

Proje konusu: Bu çalışmada, kurumsal bir şirkette işe yeni alınmış kişilerin "Kişisel Öğrenme Ağı" nı nasıl oluşturduğu, bu ağın içindeki ögelerin neler olduğu ve kişisel öğrenme ağlarının çalışanın organizasyon bünyesindeki rol ve sorumluluklarını öğrenme ve yerine getirmedeki rolü incelenecektir. Çalışma kolay ulaşılabilir durum örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiş, yirmi katılımcı ile yapılan yaklaşık 20 dakikalık görüşmelerden oluşacaktır. Görüşme soruları demografik bilgi ve kişisel öğrenme ağları hakkında detay bilgisi olmak üzere iki kısım olarak organize edilmiştir. Görüşme yapılacak katılımcılar kurumsal organizasyonda yeni işe başlamış olmaları, İngilizce bilgileri ve mesleki tecrübelerine göre belirlenmiştir. Görüşmeler yazıya döküldükten sonra anahtar kelimeler belirlenerek incelenecektir. Elde edilen veriler nitel analiz yöntemi ile incelenecektir. Çıkan sonuçlar doğrultusunda kurumsal organizasyonlardaki eğitimler için yeni uygulama önerilerinde bulunulacaktır.

Onam:

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu görüşme, Proje Yürütücüsü Doç. Dr. Fatma Nevra Seggie'nin danışmanlığında Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü Yetişkin Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Rukiye Bektaş'ın "Kişisel Öğrenme Ağı Oluşumu: İşe Yeni Girenlerin Bakış Açısı/ The Construction of Personal Learning Network (PLN) in a Corporate Organization: The Perspective of New Hires" başlıklı tez çalışmasında kullanılmak amacıyla yapılacaktır. Çalışma kapsamında, kurumsal bir şirkette yeni işe alınmış kişilerin "Kişisel Öğrenme Ağı"nı nasıl oluşturduğu, bu ağın içindeki ögelerin neler olduğu ve kişisel öğrenme ağlarının çalışanın organizasyon bünyesindeki rol ve sorumluluklarını öğrenme ve yerine getirmedeki rolü incelenmek üzere görüşmeler yapılacaktır.

Görüşme sonrasında yapılacak olan analizin geçerliliğine katkısı açısından, katılımcının izni ile görüşmelerin ses kaydı alınacaktır. Alınan kayıt araştırmacı

dışında kimse tarafından dinlenilmeyecek, kullanılmayacak ve üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmayacaktır. Görüşmelerin transkripsiyonu yapılırken katılımcıların isimleri gizli tutulacaktır. Sizle yapılan görüşmeler ileride akademik nitelikli çalışmalar için kullanılacaktır. İstediğiniz zaman çalışmaya katılmaktan vazgeçebilirsiniz. Bu durumda o ana kadar sizden toplanan veriler imha edilerek çalışma kapsamı dışında bırakılacaktır.

Çalışmaya katılmanız tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Sizden herhangi bir ücret talep edilmiyor ve size herhangi bir ödeme yapılmayacaktır.

Bu formu imzalamadan önce, çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız varsa lütfen sorun. Daha sonra sorunuz olursa, Proje Yürütücüsü Doç. Dr. Fatma Nevra Seggie'ye (E-mail: nevra.seggie@boun.edu.tr) ve araştırmacı Rukiye Bektaş'a (E-mail: rukiye.bektas14@gmail.com) sorabilirsiniz. Araştırmayla ilgili haklarınız konusunda Boğaziçi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Kurulu'na (INAREK) da danışabilirsiniz.

Adres ve telefon numaranız değişirse, araştırmacıya haber vermenizi rica ederiz.

Ben, (katılımcının adı) ....., yukarıdaki metni okudum ve katılmam istenen çalışmanın kapsamını ve amacını, gönüllü olarak üzerime düşen sorumlulukları tamamen anladım. Çalışma hakkında soru sorma imkanı buldum. Bu çalışmayı istediğim zaman ve herhangi bir neden belirtmek zorunda kalmadan bırakabileceğimi ve bıraktığım takdirde herhangi bir olumsuzluk ile karşılaşmayacağımı anladım.
Bu koşullarda söz konusu araştırmaya kendi isteğimle, hiçbir baskı ve zorlama olmaksızın katılmayı kabul ediyorum.
Formun bir örneğini aldım / almak istemiyorum (bu durumda araştırmacı bu kopyayı saklar).

Katılımcının Adı-

Soyadı:.....

İmzası:.....

Adresi (varsa Telefon No, Faks No):.....

.....

Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):...../...../.....

Araştırmacının Adı-Soyadı:.....

İmzası:.....

Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):...../...../.....

APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Age:

Sex:

Educational Background:

- Your latest degree:

  Bachelor Degree/ Masters Degree / PhD

- The type of school you most recently graduated

  In Turkey: Public University / Private University

  Abroad: Public University / Private University

Work Experience:

- _____ months
- _____ years

On which social media platforms you have accounts:

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Other_____

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM (TURKISH)

Cinsiyet:

Yaş:

Eğitim Geçmişi:

- En son aldığınız akademik derece :

  Lisans / Yüksek Lisans / Doktora

- En son akademik derece aldığınız okul türü:

  Türkiye'de ise: Devlet Üniversitesi / Vakıf Üniversitesi

  Yurtdışında ise: Devlet Üniversitesi/ Vakıf (veya Özel) Üniversitesi

Mesleki Deneyiminiz:

- _____ay
- _____yıl

Hesabınızın bulunduğu sosyal medya platformları nelerdir?

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Diğer _____

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1- What are the things you learned about your work at this stage of your life?

   a- How do you learn new things? Which resources do you use to learn them?

   b- What are your reasons for choosing your family / colleagues / internet / social media / academic writing as a source of information?

2- What are your sources of information that you used to learn? How would your preferred five resources be if you put them in order?

3- What activities did you use to learn something in the last week and what are your sources of information that you use? Describe how you plan your learning process as time and structure.

   a- Is your access to knowledge based on coincidence or need?

   b- If your access to information is based on need, where does this need come from?

   c- Do you spare some time for researching and learning?

4- Think about a project that required you to work outside your experience and comfort zone of tools, techniques, or approaches. Walk me through how you approached the learning that you needed to go through to meet this challenge.
   a- What technologies did you use and why?
   b- To whom did you reach out for help and why?

5- When you connect to others or when you read things on the internet, what factors influence how you make judgments about the worth of the contribution?

6- Do you think that components of your personal learning network change as you gain experience in your profession?

7- Have you received any certification or university diploma related to the field you are working in?

   a- How do you relate what you learn in your business life and what you learn in school life?

   b- If you do not, how do you plan to improve yourself?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TURKISH)

1- Hayatımızın bu aşamasında işiniz ile ilgili öğrendiğiniz şeyler nelerdir?
   a- Yeni öğrendiğiniz şeyleri hangi kaynakları kullanarak nasıl öğreniyorsunuz?
   b- Bilgi edinme kaynağı olarak ailenizi/iş arkadaşlarınızı/interneti/sosyal medyayı/akademik yazını tercih etme nedenleriniz nelerdir?
2- Bir şeyler öğrenmek için ya da öğrenirken bilgi kaynağı olarak kullandığınız kişi ve araçlar nelerdir? Bunları bir sıralamaya koysanız ilk beş nasıl olurdu? *(Bu kaynaklar arkadaşlar, aile bireyleri, iş arkadaşları, eski öğretmenler, kitaplar, dergiler, kurumlar, konferanslar, bloglar ve LinkedIn, Twitter gibi sosyal medya ortamları olabilir.)*
3- Son 1 haftanızı düşündüğünüzde bir şeyler öğrenmek için yaptığınız aktiviteler ve kullandığınız araçlar nelerdir? Bu sürecinizi zaman ve yapı olarak nasıl planladığınızı anlatınız.
   a- Bilgiye erişiminiz otomatik mi yoksa ihtiyaç temelli mi?
   b- Eğer ihtiyaç temelli ise bu ihtiyaç nereden kaynaklanmaktadır?
   c- Araştırma yapmaya, öğrenmeye belli bir zaman ayırıyor musunuz?
4- Konfor alanınız ve tecrübeniz dışında yapmanız gereken bir proje olduğunda bu konuya nasıl yaklaşırsınız? Bu durumla başa çıkma stratejinizi bana anlatır mısınız?
   a- Hangi teknolojileri hangi amaçla tercih ettiniz?
   b- Yardım amaçlı kimlerle irtibat kurdunuz ve bu kişileri tercih etme amacınız nedir?
5- Bir konuda insanlar ile görüştüğünüzde ya da internette bir yazı gördüğünüzde bu konunun ya da görüşmenin sizin için önemine hangi kriterlere göre karar verirsiniz?
6- Alanımızda tecrübe kazandıkça öğrenmek için başvurduğunuz kişiler ve araçlar değişiklik gösteriyor mu? Gösteriyorsa nasıl?
7- Çalıştığınız alan ile ilgili herhangi bir sertifikasyon ya da üniversite diploması aldınız mı?
   a- İş hayatınızda öğrendikleriniz ile okul hayatında öğrendikleriniz arasında nasıl bir ilişki kuruyorsunuz?
   b- Eğer kuramıyorsanız kendinizi nasıl geliştiriyorsunuz?

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