

Organizational Learning Culture And Corporate Innovation

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Abstract: *This study investigates the link between organisational learning culture and corporate innovation. The corporate world is a very competitive place, forcing all organisations to put their best foot forward if they want to survive and get to the top of the food chain. A company must adopt new strategies to survive in the environment due to the intense competition in the commercial world. This study also includes metrics of corporate innovation, such as technological innovation and strategic innovation, as well as characteristics of organizational learning culture, such as continuous learning and team learning.*

Keywords: Continuous Learning, Corporate Innovation, Organizational Learning Culture, Strategic Innovation, Team Learning and Technological Innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Since the business environment is a very competitive environment, there is need for organizations to cultivate a learning culture to be able to survive in the harsh business environment. For organization to cope with current business opportunities and threat, organization need to learn new knowledge and skills to improve the organizational performance as well as strategy to sustain a competitive edge against other competitors in the harsh business environment. Organizational learning plays a major role in the survival of any organization. Argyris and Schon (1978) propose a typology of learning which involves single loop, double loop, and deutero-learning. In general, it is considered as the process of developing new knowledge and insights derived from common experiences of people within the organization and it has the potential to influence behaviors and improve a firm's capabilities. According to Kast and Rosenzweig (1985), it is common to highlight the value of change without taking into account the necessity for system upkeep and stability. A realistic perspective on organisational change acknowledges that for a company to thrive and survive, both stability and adaptation are necessary. When deciding how to shape their own destiny, organisations should be proactive rather than reactive. They will be able to influence change rather than just react to it thanks to this. Corporate innovation aids in an organization's ability to adapt to change (Decoster, 2011, Coleman and Edey, 2012, Ekunah, 2008, Adebumi, 2006, Rotter, 1996). According to Robbins (1998), corporate innovation is a deliberate effort to extend company growth in an efficient and effective manner. This type of radical re-invention is multidimensional, multi-level, and discontinuous as opposed to some unplanned and ongoing change. When suppliers go out of business, become expensive and unpredictable, have ineffective distribution methods, or have levels of skill or competence that are significantly above those of the industry, there may be a need for innovation within the organisation (Tha et al, 2004; Jaja, 2000; Robbins, 1998).

Corporate innovation is not always an easy thing to achieve. Schon (1963) and Servo (1988), cited by Iyayi, Akinmayowa, and Enaini (2012), state that in order to harness an idea's potential and turn it into reality, one must be diligent, prudent, change the way that many people think, stake a claim to the resources needed to fuel growth, and typically engage in a protracted struggle involving many parties that calls for great endurance and proof on the part of the victor. According to Stoner, Freeman, and Gilbert (2007), the processes that make an organisation stable constrain corporate innovation. Individual self-interest, organisational culture, and individual perceptions of organisational culture were identified as the three main barriers preventing business innovation (Stoner et al, 2007). Organizational culture, according to Kast and Rosenzweig (1985), is the collection of significant values, beliefs, and understanding that members have in common. It offers patterned methods of thinking, feeling, and acting that direct participants in the organization's decision-making and other tasks. According to Pittigrew (2008), organisational culture consists of steadfast rules that influence behaviour. It gives organisation members a feeling of identity, makes it easier to commit to something bigger than oneself, and improves social system stability, all of which constrain the innovation process. Corporate innovation is therefore secured if management can address the fundamental issues with organisational learning culture.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For organization to survive the competition in the business environment, they need to cultivate a learning culture thereby creating room for innovation in the organization. Most organization has collapse and gone out of business because they are unable to survive in the business environment due to lack of innovation in the organization. Organization need to set up a blue print for the training and development of the staff in the organization which in turn give them the required skills to be innovative and take the organization to the next level and climax in the harsh competitive business environment. In Nigerian banking system, most banks have suffered set back in their organization due to lack of innovation and not having the required trained personnel to champion the competition in the banking system which has lead to the close down of most banks in Nigeria. Such banks are diamond bank, intercontinental bank, All state trust bank, oceanic bank, enterprise bank, sky bank, fin bank, merchant bank, bank PHB e.t.c (Ebiasuode, Onouha

and Nwede, 2017). According to NDIC various reports were associated with weak board and management oversight, non-performing insider-related facilities, declining asset quality, fraud attributable to weak internal control systems, over-dependence of public sector deposits, foreign exchange trading and dearth of skilled manpower in the sector of the economy (NDIC, 2008).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study's goal is to demonstrate the impact of organisational learning culture on corporate innovation. This research also aims to:

- Ascertain the influence of Continues learning on Technological innovation.
- Ascertain the influence of Continues learning on Strategic Innovation.
- Ascertain the influence of Team Learning on Technological Innovation.
- Ascertain the influence of Team Learning on Strategic Innovation.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

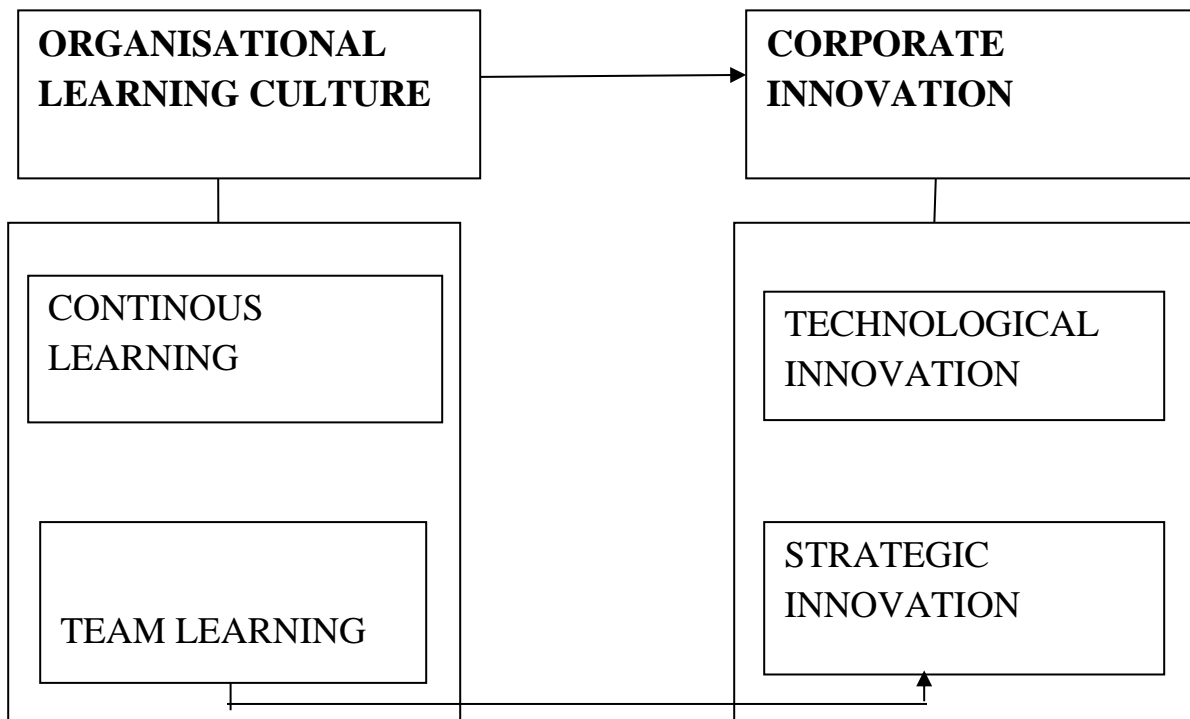
The implication of this study is to review research on the stiff competition in the business environment and the survival of an organization. For the organization to survival in the competitive business environment, there is need for them to be innovative as this research will be mainly focusing on the following:

- Continues learning
- Team learning
- Technological Innovation
- Strategic Innovation

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

As this is a new topic of research, the study's limitation is the lack of relevant literature on the subject. Organizational learning culture and corporate innovation is a groundbreaking topic of study that many researchers are delving into.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Author (2020)

The conceptual framework above show the relationship between organizational learning culture and corporate innovation as well as the dimensions of organizational learning culture (independent variable) which are continues learning and team learning while the measures of the corporate innovation (dependent variable) which are technological innovation and strategic innovation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CULTURE

The concept of organizational learning has been highly acknowledged by researchers in the recent past. The concept posits that learning and successful organizations have the capacity to learn sooner, better and more quickly than their rivals and employ this learning in their working process (Alavi, 2010). Organizational learning dates back to the late 1970s, a period when researchers focused on the concept from a psychological viewpoint. Chris Argyris and Donald Schon by their 1978 work, advanced the concepts of single-loop and double-loop learning (Argyris&Schon, 1978). They christened the processes by which mistakes are rectified by employing other strategies or processes calculated to produce different and successful outcomes, single-loop learning. They expounded that single-loop and double-loop learning processes can be found in organizations, they both kinds of organizational learning. Single-loop learning happens when organizations identify faults, fix them, and then proceed with their existing policies and objectives. It is said to be double-loop learning where organizations identify faults and alter their policies and objectives before they adopt remedial action (Romero, 2014). Organizational learning has also been defined as the actions of the organization like acquiring knowledge, distributing information, interpreting that information, and consciously or subconsciously maintaining memory on the positive variation of the organization (Templeton, et al, 2002). In terms of the learning function in behavior change, organizational learning is that combined process tailored to support and protects the organizational behavior change (Rodriguez, et al, 2003). It entails the production of new knowledge, skills and behavior that supports an organization to adjust well to new ways of operation. It can be regarded as a dynamic process. It includes creating, acquiring, and collecting knowledge with the objective of developing resources, and capacity for improved performance of the organization (Perez, 2005). Alerga and Chiva (2008) described organizational learning as the process by which organizations learn. This encompasses every change to the organizational models which has the effect of improving or preserving operational performance. The means of evaluating learning in organizations is also an issue of focus. Evaluation according to Cullingford (2010) to study and understand learning is to enter “that no-man’s land between thinking as a capacity and development as a process of change”. Organizational learning model by Neef (2001) was adopted because they were general and modern. These measures consisted of the learning culture of the organization, extent of team work and learning, common perspective, sharing of knowledge, collaborative leadership, development of the staff’s skills and competences and systemic thinking. (Neef, 2001). Organization Learning is a result of organizational inquiry. Every time the expected end results vary from the actual outcome, the researcher or organization will want to engage in inquiry to find out and, where required, solve the inconsistency. It is in the course of this inquiry, that the researcher will interact with other members of the organization. Learning takes place in the course of this interaction. It for that reason, that learning is said to be a direct product of this interaction Argyris and Schon (1996).

DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CULTURE

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Continues learning represents an attempt by the organization to generate leaning opportunities for all employees. This dimension is important for short and long term success of both individuals and organizations. Maurer (2010) study on the aspects of managerial work that are associated with a need for competence at continuous learning revealed that at individual level the benefits of continuous learning are the acquisition of better skill sets. This increases their capability to attain the organizations objectives, the individual is also better placed to be competitive in the employment market. According to Maurer (2010) study continuous learning is increasingly important because the need to continuously gain new skills and develop professionally is essential to career success and organizational success, and having an organization in which learning, development, and growth is part of existing jobs can help in retention of employees. Since the ability to constantly acquire knowledge bears the potential to result in increased productivity, organizations stand to benefit by remaining effective, innovative and competitive (Mirvis, 2011). The ever present fight by organizations to remain in business and continue growing in the increasingly competitive business environment, necessitates that continuous learning remains a significant factor within organizations. To be able to learn and nature one’s skill set is increasingly being acknowledged as a core career competency (Hall & Mirvis, 2012). It is now up to the members of staff at personal level to take charge for their own career growth and acquisition of the varied knowledge and skills required. The change means the process of learning and the capability to always gain more updated skills and to better the current ones is now a critical requirement for career success (Weiss, 2010). Mayo (2010) study concluded that the nature of the job and requisite competencies have a profound effect on the professional development a member of staff. The avenues for acquisition of new skills can be by sources: training, education and communication. Even then the work environment remains a major determinant if the new skills result in a change in on the job behavior (Weiss, 2010). Where members of staff cannot find an opportunity to apply the fresh skills acquired, the incentive to learn is reduced. In contrast, where an organization’s culture identifies or rewards members of staff who take initiative to practice the new ideas and skills, this may result in a positive impact in terms of continuous learning amongst the members of staff (Mueller, 2011).

Norashikin et al., (2013) study concluded that continuous learning opportunities through scholarships, training programmes, and research grants should be made available to the academics to add value to their existing skills and knowledge for higher performance. As continuous learning is reflected as opportunities to learn (Watkins & Marsick, 1999), academics perceived prospect for ongoing education and growth as crucial to contribute to overall performance. Indeed, as learning is integrated into work, academics can have the opportunity to learn on the job and subsequently transform it into improved teaching, learning and research activities. A study by Behjanna and Sharifi (2015) showed that continuous learning has significant positive impacts on organizational performance. In their study they concluded that continuous learning is a process that occurs with growing knowledge and improving performance over time. In general, persons who seek continual learning are more professional in business development and transferring knowledge, abilities, and behaviours to assist new knowledge learned in reforming acts. According to Behjanna and Sharifi (2015) continuous learning is effective in improving job skills of manpower. Also these learning raised the information of the employees and develop their knowledge and skills and change their behaviors which affect the job. Consistent with Behjanna and Sharifi (2015), are the results of Sharifi (2004) which showed that intermittent and continuous learning is in relation with effectiveness of university professors. The study was also in accordance with Taslimi, et al (2004) study which demonstrated that the National Iranian Oil Distribution and Refinery follows an appropriate organizational learning approaches for continuous learning of its organization to identify and reach the learning needs and develop and implement the knowledge, practically.

I postulate that Continuous learning of employees in the organization helps the organization to be innovative. The new skills acquired by employees in the organization will aid in improving the technological innovation in the organization which in turn aid the organization to strive in the harsh competitive business environment. There is need for every organization to engage their staff in continuous learning to enable them improve the technological skill been acquired in the process for a greater organizational success in the business environment. As staff in the organization continue to learn, they develop and strategies needed to be innovative in order to survive the competitive business environment.

TEAM LEARNING

Teams have become the key learning unit in organizations, but it is important that they learn as a team, not act as individuals learning alone but acting as a team. To learn together, team members must become masters of dialogue and discussion (Senge, 1990). Pokharel and Sang (2015) study found that team learning is developed when members of the team share and learn new knowledge, skills and perspectives. Even though individuals in the team may start off differently, going through an on-going capacity and continuous effort, teams can work efficiently. When the member of the teams are supportive and trust each other, it will lead to a great team performance. Through effective team collaboration, common goals set by the organization can be achieved (Watkins & Marsick, 2003). The study of Norashikin et al (2016) findings revealed that team learning which represents the learning at the group level was also found to have the positive significant relationship with organizational high productivity. Watkins and Marsick (2003) state that various group and organizational conditions have an impact on team learning and determining whether team learning becomes organizational learning. Team factors include an overall appreciation for teamwork, opportunities for individual expression, and operating principles which balance necessary tasks with maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. Organizational factors include support for the operation of teams and collaboration across functional lines as a routine way of working. Nkawautei (2012) study sought to determine the factors that influence organizational learning and the impact of organizational learning on continuous improvement among commercial banks in Kenya. This study concluded that teamwork is very essential for organizations to achieve continuous improvement. A divided workforce has a divided vision hence it becomes really hard to achieve the required goals. And if the employees are not being compensated well, their productivity becomes low hence their contribution towards continuous improvement deteriorate. These findings support the previous work demonstrating organizations whose leaders promote collaboration, cooperation, and learning in teams are likely to have higher performance than organizations not exhibiting these attributes (Yang & Chen, 2005). According to Wetherington (2013), unless awareness of the relationships between learning and performance is translated into action, organizational performance might not be maximized. Leaders can improve performance by exhibiting a focus on learning and by influencing learning throughout the organization. Leaders should focus on creating a culture of openness and cooperation to facilitate performance. A study by Omadede (2012) on learning organizational practices at Kenya Shell Limited found that the organization mainly uses cross functional workshops, safety days, away days and the on boarding programs to implement the strategy of collaboration and team learning in the organization. However programs for facilitating teams to adopt good ideas from the minority and harnessing group alignment, functioning as a whole and synergy manifestation was found to be limited. Some theories of team learning are premised on the belief that learning occurs from the differences within the team variance, the different team members bring experiences of diversity which contribute to team learning. Kayes and Kolb (2005) consider team learning as a product of individual experience as well as the interaction of experience among team members. To others team learning is all about team agreement. In accordance with the team norms perspective, in which team learning is considered a relatively stable measure of teams. Team learning therefore becomes those shared beliefs and behaviors within a team.

Proximal learning refers to the mechanisms by which team learning results in improved performance of teams. This learning happens when a person is engaging with another person or persons to attain the capability to solve problems that were beyond one person. Meaning persons working as a team stand to achieve better outcomes when working together, than they could individually (Kayes, 2003). The potential for greater performance is achieved through the opportunity for individuals to learn from each other through

sharing of expertise, knowledge and insight during the course of problem solving. The differences in individual capacity, knowledge and experience amongst the team members produce proximal learning processes. Learning is a contributor to organizational effectiveness. It enables teams to generate knowledge amongst team members, generate knowledge with those outside team, and to work with the environment to facilitate adaptation to change. Team learning results in enhanced performance for the team which translates to enhanced organizational performance. Team learning therefore provides an avenue for organizations to crack complex problems, create new knowledge, and to improve the performance of task specific project teams. On the other hand, failures in learning every so often suffocate the capacity of organizations to perform (Kayes, 2004).

Am of the view that Team learning is very important in the survival of any organization in the competitive business environment in which different knowledge and skills from team members create a synergy to aid the organization to improve in their strategic innovation to be at the top of the food chain in the harsh business environment. Team learning make strategic innovation easier as different skills and knowledge are put together to improve the performance of the organization. Team learning also plays a vital role in the technological innovation in the organization. When employees engage in team learning, it improves their technological innovation.

CORPORATIVE INNOVATION

Different scholars over the years have been trying to understand the phenomenal of corporate innovation. There is no general definition of the term corporate innovativeness and several scholars using their own approach in the definition of corporate innovation. Corporate innovation refers to the intentional fostering of thinking out of the box in a corporate environment. For an organization to be at the climax in the business environment there is need for corporate innovation as innovation is coming up with novel idea or new idea. According to Linder et al (2003) define innovation as implementing new ideas that create value. Innovation is what most organizations depends on in today's business world (Kanter 1999). Innovation is defined as the process of discovery and development that creates new products, production processes, organizations, technologies, or institutional or systemic arrangements (VanKleef & Roome, 2007). According to Terziovski (2008), corporate innovation is simply a radical or transformational change in an organization that results in a significantly different or new entity arising from an organization entering into venture systems, commercial arrangements or engaging in productive activities and processes that it had hitherto not been involved with. Robbins (1998) posits that corporate innovation is a planned and systematic attempt at efficiently and effectively expanding corporate growth, a form of radical re-invention, which is multidimensional, multi-level and discontinuous as opposed to some unorganized and continuous change. The need for innovation in the organization could arise when sources of supply go out of business or are becoming costly and irregular, when distribution systems are inefficient, when expertise or competence is far ahead of what obtains in the industry (Jha et al, 2004, Jaja, 2000, Robbins, 1998).

THE MEASURES OF CORPORATIVE INNOVATION

The measures of the dependent variables compose of technological innovation and strategic innovation.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Many researchers of innovation focused technological innovation (Freeman & Soete, 2000). Technological innovation became one of the most important factors of all the different sizes of the organizations are concerned. So, in order the organization stay in the market place they have to adopt the rapid change of the technologies. Technological innovation by definition means, the adoption of new ideas which appropriate to the new product or service, and introduction new element to organization's production process or service operation (Subramanian & Nilakanta, 1996). Technological innovation is important factor which defines how the organization has competitive advantage, its effectiveness and its overall success. On the other hand, technological innovation seems to have an impact on work productivity, competitive environment, competitive advantage and overall performance of the organization. Technological innovation is something which is unavoidable if the organization wants to stay at the market or enter new market and if they want to gain competitive advantage (Becheikh et al 2006). According to Daneels and Kleinschmidt (2001), in the context of product development argued that, new product development consists of the combination of technology and market. They further argued that, when a firm undertaking new product development they should have technology which is enabling to them to develop new product and serve their customers. Technological innovation for product or process contributes to cost reduction, quality improvement, suitable change in product size which fits customer demand, raw material substitution and new product (K. N. Krishnaswamy et al, 2010).

STRATEGIC INNOVATION

The strategic innovation is a central concern of firms; managers are faced with the challenge of mobilizing the innovative potential of all sorts of employees. As these employees have a capital of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966) about the production process, the work organization and the product design, mobilizing this knowledge can result in workplace Strategic innovations with high returns on investments (Getz & Robinson, 2003). HR managers therefore face the challenge of creating a work environment in which employees can develop and exploit their innovative potential. According to a recent meta-analysis (Hammond et al., 2011), job

characteristics are of central importance for employee innovativeness. Therefore the view of strategic innovation as a process of improvement which may reside in the form of a problem solving activity a new method where same studies cited (Pavitt, 1984), regarding it as a process involving commercial use a new business. However the concept of Strategic innovation combining these in an integrated process of incremental improvement and turning into commercial use is developed by scholars as cited (Strecker, 2007). The other concept of strategic innovation, used by (Strecker, 2007) is somewhat broader, this is because the concept is concerned with implementation of new technologies and new processes although not necessary both together in all cases. Another term of strategic innovation used in this study will follow the concept that is a process of transforming the telecommunication frontier into the commercialized product/process where strategic innovation in a competitive market thus:

CONCLUSION

Organizational learning culture and corporate innovativeness plays a pivotal role in the survival of any organization. The competitiveness in the business environment is so alarming that for any organization to strive in the business environment, certain factors must be considered which bring us down to continuous learning, team learning and employee empowerment on the part of organizational learning culture while that of the corporate innovativeness, we have the technological innovation, strategic innovation and administrative innovation. The listed dimensions and measures of the independent and the dependent variable give a competitive advantage to any organization that can easily employ these methods in their organization. Organizational learning culture and corporate innovation cannot be over emphasized. Organizational learning culture is defined as a set of norms and beliefs regarding an organization's operation that promote methodical, in-depth techniques targeted at achieving higher-level that is double loop (Schein, 1985). As corporate innovation involve creating of new ideas, techniques and process to be at the top of the food chain as well as survive the rivalry in the business environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the course of this research, the following recommendations are made for organizations to survive the stiff competition.

1. Employees must be included in the organization's day-to-day operations.
2. There should be room for innovativeness in the organization.
3. Reward should be given to employees for creativity.
4. Training and developing the skills of the employees should be the order of the day.

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