

Employee Diversity and Organizational Learning: A Conceptual Review

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ABSTRACT: *The focus of this paper was to explore the relationship between Diversity and Organizational learning. The paper laid down the critical issues that concerns both diversity and organizational learning. The theoretical framework stemmed from the theory of bias developed decades ago by Vaughan. The theory of bias triggers discrimination and prejudice that negates the benefits of diversity in the work place. The Paper reviewed literature extensively on the concepts of diversity and its dimensions which are age, ethnicity, culture, gender and education, as well as the concepts of organizational learning and organizational learning theory. The components of organization learning theory reviewed are single and double-loop learning, organizational knowledge creation theory and the five building blocks. The paper theoretically established relationships between diversity and organizational learning. Theoretical review shows that many scholars agree that both diversity and organizational learning are very advantageous to the success of an organization. There is also unanimity of views by scholars that diversity and organizational learning have a positive and significant relationship, hence, this paper concludes by aligning with the views of scholars that diversity and organizational learning have significant relationship. The paper therefore, recommends that there is need to empirically validate the outcomes as revealed by this paper.*

Keywords: *Diversity, Age, Gender, Education, Ethnicity, Culture, Organizational Learning.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The significance of learning cannot be over-accentuated whether it is at individual or organizational level. Learning has become an authentic tool for growth, adaptation and capacity building in complex and fast changing business environments as witnessed since the 21st century. It is imagined that the operative sustainability of corporate institutions is simultaneous with the organizations' level of conformity with organizational learning customs and techniques. Hence, it is of the essence that to cultivate an effective organizational learning culture, an organization has to move from self-protective reasoning and action or reactive strategy as seen in contingency approach, to belligerent and strategic reasoning by adopting a proactive strategy. If any organization is to become relevant in its industry, then it should develop a pulsating line of organizational learning action and put it into practice. Organizational learning theory depicts how learning takes place in organizations, the structures that are put in place to assure that the learning is effective and unremitting, the factors that can encumber organizational learning and what can be done to confront those challenges.

Organizations are made up of individuals and it is these individuals who carry out the actions that produce organizational learning (Argyris,1992). However, there is paradigm that the organization itself must create to enable learning by the individuals within the organization to be efficacious and to be communicable to the organization. Learning is synonymous with management of diversity, growth and performance; however, this is usually not an easy process. To achieve learning goals, it requires management commitment to both time and resources to enable it yield the desired results. Oisamoje, &Idubor (2013), contend that history is all-pervading with organizations that disregarded learning and are today non-existent or at best, back benchers in the industries they once ruled. In summarizing the importance of organizational learning, it is imperative to note that, the rate at which individuals and organizations learn may become the only sustainable competitive advantage especially in knowledge intensive industries like the high-tech sector (Strata,2002).

However, bearing in mind the fact that social interactions are essential in the creation of knowledge within the organization, another momentous characteristic that has been the theme of latest deliberations in the learning literature is the corollary of the context in which learning takes place (Argote, 2011). Argote (2011),

further highlighted that situations are an essential factor for learning, because it complements with the consideration of procedures, encounters, and boundaries between actors in the development of organizational knowledge. To be part of the institutional milieu, organizations have to delineate their action plans and the procedures required to its actions, given this learning process in which both the strategies outlined and the values are to be fed back in this interaction. Often time, it has been seen that intentionally considerable knowledge is entrenched in and never-ending by the influence of organizational culture. Most tellingly, the importance of knowledge can most often be indistinguishable and its usefulness put out when actors append what, in a different context do not perceive the organization's aim to achieve by sharing specific knowledge to everyone in the organization (Easterby-Smith, Lyles, & Tsang, 2008). This knowledge-sharing process is perceived differently as the factors that engender the relationships seen in larger corporations. However, the oddities of large organization in a given environment trickle in through its aptitude for novelty in products, production, and organizational processes, which is inter-twined in the organizational system and its human capital (Figueiredo, 2011).

Over the years, the diversity of the world's population has been altered by socio-economic, geo-political, environmental and technological factors. These factors have as a result altered the compositions of many societies and influenced the way human beings interrelate, work or live together with one another. Consequently, many organizations are investigating several alternative plans of action to positively exploit the growing diversity to remain and or gain competitive advantage. This paradigm shift in the global demographic mix will at the same time present challenges and prospects in the nearest future. Notably, numerous organizations are enthusiastically incorporating diversity into the recruitment processes to ensure the best talents are hired from across the globe. Many scholars and human resource professionals have thus, projected that the features of our future workplaces will consist of diverse groups of people drawn from various parts of the world (Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

Although discussions on diversity in organizations have always followed a discourse about its significance in the accomplishment of organizational goals by tackling existing challenges, as well as the search for competitive advantages due to openness to different points of view, the effective management of diversity of the workforce is not yet accomplished in many organizations (Alves & Galeão-Silva, 2004; Perlin, Gomes, Kneipp, Frizzo, & Rosa, 2016). Furthermore, it is predicted that the vigorous movement of people from various races or culture which consist of all works of life and backgrounds will transform the views of existing socio-cultural dimensions. However, the rapid increase in diversity is seen to have the capacity to challenge peoples' perceptions of the demographic factors of race, language, ethnicity, gender, age, and physical disability in the global workplace (Green, López, Wysocki, & Kepner, 2002). Other factors such as sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religious and political ideologies will become prominent in the future. Given the challenges these factors will pose, many organizations have designated to espouse and prioritize workplace diversity.

When left un-managed, employee diversity is more likely to damage morale, increase employee turnover, and cause significant communication problems (Eugene, Lee, Tan-siew, Tee say & Yang, 2011). The above mentioned negative effect of workforce diversity is prevalent to organizations today, but requires solutions for organizations to perform optimally. According to Dike (2013), many organizations currently address the adoption of diversity to foster creativity and openness in the workplace. Odita and Egbule (2015), studied workforce diversity and organizational effectiveness in Nigerian Brewing Industry and found that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables of workforce diversity and organizational effectiveness; in particular cultural diversity was found to be more effective, also team building & group training which mediates between workforce diversity and organizational effectiveness. Obuma and Worlu (2017), undertook a study on workplace diversity and employee engagement of deposit money banks in Rivers State. The result of the findings of study shows that, there is a correlation in the dimensions of workplace diversity and the measures of employee engagement in the deposit money banks studied. The above studies explored the relationships between workplace diversity and organizational effectiveness, as well as employee engagement. Against this backdrop, this paper examines the relationship between Workplace Diversity and Organizational Learning theoretically.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Workplace diversity has not been given due attention by Nigerian organizations, largely due to a seeming corporate culture resulted from lack of patronage by people in authority, particularly in human resource procurement and administration (Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011). This is due to the vast number of works that have found that workplace diversity contrasts dual implication on learning in most organizations. Schaufeli and Salanova (2007), advance that the reason for studying organizational learning is related to improving human behaviour such as malfunctioning, weakness and pathology which are found among employees. They went further to state that, this is because learning helps put management to be at ease, create environmental ambience for improvement, creativeness and help in managing diversity.

Diversity theory is grounded on concepts based on history, research and other paradigms. Many of the concepts and paradigms are closely tied to different disciplines such as leadership, management, social science, political science and psychology. A case at hand is the myth that females tend to be more participative as leaders than men, which is based on the silence effect theory (Jones & George, 2006). Alternatively, Robbins and Judge (2007), contend that cultural diversity affects motivation. For instance, in the United States, the predominant emphasis is rationality, individual thought and goal accomplishment. As society has progressed in awareness of research and application, different theories have emerged and contributed to the theoretical concepts of diversity in the workforce. This study is based upon the theory of bias that is linked to the work of Vaughan(1936) in his book *General Psychology*. Vaughan described bias as a slant or bent, a pointing of the mental life toward certain views and reactions. Knowingly, a bias is a point of view; is a posture, a set, and preparedness for acting, thinking or judging in a definite manner. A bias is an attitude, expectation or a chauvinism which may manifest itself in overt behavior or in thoughts and feelings about behavior. Very often the determining tendency operates unconsciously, that is, without the individual being aware of the motive fundamentally responsible for his thinking or action.

Interest in biases within human cognition developed early in psychology and is categorized into representative bias, overconfidence bias, anchoring bias, confirmation bias, availability bias, escalation of commitment bias, similar to me effect bias, social status effect bias and salience effect bias. Bias not corrected can result in discrimination and negate the importance of diversity and learning in organization. To this effect, bias and discrimination both affect learning without correction of the behavior, thus the diversity concepts are based upon understanding what diversity is. Diversity is human characteristics that make people different from one another (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2007). Roberge, Balkin and Cardy, (2011), state that diversity refers to differences between individuals on any attribute that may lead to the perception that another person is different from the self. Carrell, Mann, and Seigler(2006), believe as it pertains to the workforce modern definitions of workforce diversity, which focuses on the ways people differ, which can affect a task or relationship within an organization.

III. CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY

The changes in the world with expeditious traveling advantages, instant communication and multimedia sources have made the world smaller and more interactive; thus, the world no longer has a melting pot and has navigated into a multi-cultural and multi-racial society. These diverse differences are daily seen or encountered in the workplace, in the customers of businesses and the employees. Gomez-Mejia *et al.*(2007), view diversity as the human distinctiveness which makes people poles apart from one another. This includes biological attributes such as race, gender, age, color, national origin, as well as family and society in which individuals were born into. The second group is bendable by the individual, such as work experience, income, marital status, military experience, religion, political beliefs, language, geographical location, education, values and ethics. According to Carrellet *al.*(2006), diversity in the work place also comprises of sexual orientation, abilities, organization affiliation and personality. Jayne and Dipboye (2004), contend that diversity has emerged from a focus on lawfully cosseted features such as race (ethnicity), gender and age to a much broader definition that entails the entire spectrum of human differences. These views essentially indicate that diversity encapsulates all aspects of differences that exist in human beings that make them unique and distinct from one another.

On the other hand, Canas and Sondak (2010), put forward the dimensions of diversity to be primary and secondary. They stated that primary dimension entails age, gender, race, ethnicity and physical abilities while the secondary dimension comprises of socio-economical status, geographical location, marital status, religious affiliation and education. All these important features exist amongst individuals that work in organizations, and if not properly managed could result in conflicts that affect organization negatively. It is important to note, that diversity is not a bad omen, and this is because its effective management is very advantageous to the growth and survivability of organizations, as it is helpful in accomplishment of competitive advantage and increased performance. According to Roberge *et al.*(2011), stakeholders must feel integrated and supported regardless of their diversity composition with regards to gender, culture, religion, expertise or personality. This aligns with the concept of collectivistic versus individualistic values. In the same way, Christian, Porter and Moffitt (2006), opined that the acceptance of workplace diversity has become an essential corporate strategy to improve organizational management, competitive advantage and maximize profits.

According to Amaliyah(2015), modern organizations now recognize the critical need to adopt, invest and implement diversity as a corporate strategy for talent management. Research findings had revealed that diversity can be a fundamental relationship between corporate mission or vision and the overall performance (Amaliyah,2015). Notwithstanding the growing significance of diversity, there is an absence of knowledge on its effect on the future of the workplace, society and the global economy. Hence, to satisfactorily appreciate the concept of diversity, it is essential to investigate the various definitions currently advocated by scholars in

literature. Diversity has also been linked with several other performance indicators in organizations including sustainability and productivity. Barta, Kleiner, and Neumann (2012), had reported that there is a significant and positive correlation between a diverse workforce and productivity. The goal being pursued by all organizations is to enhance performance, thereby surviving from shocks being experienced in the ever escalating business environment, hence, diversity is seen to predict performance and organization also attains high performance through effective and positive learning action plans.

However, Ilmakunnas and Ilmakunnas (2011), explored the effect of diversity on productivity and established that individual creativeness and occurrence of communication of a diverse workforce plays a part in enhancing productivity. However, the shared combination of learning within organizations stems from the diversity of human capital. This emerges from experiences, training and racial/cultural diverse human capital, which contributes to innovation as well as has positive results on productivity within organizations (Okoro & Washington, 2012). Bearing in mind the sprouting of challenges in the global business environment, organizations are currently with developing policies and strategies to appeal to future talent effectively. Workplace diversity has over the years continued to gain fame among organizations who ad infinitum seek global extension, and maximization of profits amidst growing competition for scarce talent, resources and market share. It is important to note that, in the nearest future companies and organizations will need to formulate effective strategies and increase investments in diversity programmes to remain globally competitive. On the other hand, it is predictable that firms with best workplace diversity strategies will continue to attract the largest pool of talent, maximize recruitment, lower operational costs (attain efficiency) amongst other benefits. Experiential research has revealed that the profit margins of companies with diverse teams of employees are 35% higher than homogeneous firms (McKinsey, 2018). However, workplace diversity presents challenges to many organizations. The recruitment of people of diverse backgrounds, cultures and characteristics can present problems in the workplace. The importance, complexity, and holistic nature of the concept mean organizations are required to address the problems that may arise from hiring talents or operations in regions with diverse people and cultures.

According to Robinson, Fenwick and Lip (2002), the relentlessly altering dynamics of global business requires companies to embrace inclusiveness in the face of diversity. This will enable the firms to muddle through not only workplace diversity challenges but also increase learning, productivity, profit maximization, and competitive advantage in the ever increasing competitive climate of globalization and organizational management. Ashton (2010), categorized diversity into two dimensions: the primary dimension and the secondary dimension. The primary dimension such as age, gender, sexual orientation and so on, exhibits the main differences between various individuals. This primary differences also have the most impact on initial encounters and can be easily noticed and serve as filters through which people view the world. On the hand, secondary dimensions such as religion, education, geographical location, income etc. are those features that are not easily noticeable in the first encounter and can even change throughout different encounters and are only noticed after some interactions occur between individuals. (Ashton 2010).

Globalization in this recent time has triggered off more interaction amongst people from different cultures and backgrounds than before. People are now more open-minded in the marketplace worldwide, with competitions coming from almost everywhere in the continent. Diversity can be a problem to an organization but could also be a solution, it comes with its disadvantages and advantages, could be dangerous but also constructive. The challenge then is to extract the very essence of diversity and tactically manage it for the improvement of the people and the organization. Based on the proceeding, it is evident that for organizations to effectively compete and succeed in the current global economic climate there is an urgent need to identify, examine and highlight the merits and demerits workplace diversity. Many organizations throughout Nigeria are uncertain of what it takes to effectively manage diversity. This is partly due to the fact that top management only recently became aware of the combined need and importance of this issue. Ehimare and Ogaga Oghene (2011), state that workplace diversity has been called a multi-ethnic demographic because it represents the way the workforce of an organization differs from one another.

In recent years, a rising attention paid to workforce diversity have been substantial and as such have forced companies to embrace these concepts with the aim of increasing productivity and profit. This forced integration has created divergence and uncertainty in the workforce, as management is not skilled enough to control the concept of diversity management and its ethics, and so managers are finding it difficult to effectively practice diversity management, which in turn has become an albatross on their neck (Odit & Egbule, 2015). Scott & Sims (2016), view workforce diversity as a strategy that promotes and supports the integration of human diversity at all levels and uses focused diversity and inclusion policies and practices to guide this approach in work environments. All these definitions simply show that diversity is all about these characteristics that make us different or similar to one another. In an organizational setting, a diverse workforce consists of a mixture of employees from various genders, ages, races, ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs etc.

IV. DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

The most vital issues of diversity are how to deal with the problems of discrimination in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, educational background and culture. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between diversity and organizational learning in the workplace. Various factors enhance the relationship between diversity & organizational learning; however, this paper explored age, gender, ethnicity, culture and education as the dimensions of diversity. It is important to note that organizational outcomes dwindle because the nucleus values of diversity are not accurately employed in organization (Salami, 2010). The dimensions of diversity are expounded below:

Ethnicity: The growth of a multicultural workforce took center stage in the 90's and is still advancing in momentum even in this new era (Zgourides, Johnson & Watson, 2002). Along with the increase in diversity has been an increase in the use of work teams in general, with the intention of utilizing greater involvement and networks to perk up and enhance both employee satisfaction and business performance. Even though the nature of workforce composition is rapidly becoming more mixed in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, etc. parallel interest has been increasing about the impact of such diversity in our institutions. Ethnicity could be seen as an assembly of individuals who share common cultural traditions and customary practices and also provide their members with a self mindful distinctiveness as a nation (Sayers, 2012). Ethnic diversity entail diversity in language, religions, races and cultures as witnessed in Nigeria and many other countries. A reasonable level of ethnic diversity has no impact on team performance in terms of business outcomes regarding sales, profit, and market share; however, if at least the preponderance of team or group members is ethnically diverse, then more ethnic diversity has a positive impact on performance (Gupta, 2013).

Age: Age diversity is a mutual phenomenon that is existing in virtually all groupings, such as families, higher institutions, sports teams, and work or team groups with members of anecdotal ages (Kunze, Boehm & Bruch, 2013). Given that workforce is distinctive in its generational diversity, it presents new challenges to organizations making an effort to catch the attention of, keep hold of, manage, and stimulate quality employees. Each generation believes that its strengths are exceptional and they do not boost those of other generations (Rowe, 2010). Where age diversity is practiced, the gains are credited to both the organization and the employees. Therefore, having an age diverse environment produces and creates better working relationships and enhances social cohesion for all. Growing age in workplace diversity has become part of many organizations. There are two major theories which give details this relationship; the social identity and self-categorization. Individuals are seen to categorize themselves into certain groups on the basis of dimensions that are individually germane for them according to social identity and self-categorization theory (Kunze, Boehm & Bruch, 2009). Therefore, individuals have a propensity to favour members of their own age group at the expenses of the other age groupings, against which they may show prejudice.

Gender: Gender-based discrimination in organizations are strengthened and vindicated by labels and biases that describe positive characteristics and therefore of a higher status to the males than females (Leonard & Levine, 2003). In other words, organizations prefer to hire male workers compared with women because they are perceived to have better performance and ability to manage their jobs. Further, a significant amount of workforce diversity remains unproductive as long as gender issues are not first acknowledged and handled accordingly. Powell (2011), described gender as the physiological presumption of somebody being either male or female, like hopes and beliefs concerning what kind of mind-set, behaviours, values, knowledge, skills, and areas of interest are more apposite for or emblematic of one sex than the other. The study of gender diversity focuses on how individuals believe that males and females differ. These gender variations influence the manner in which individuals react to the behaviours of others in the work settings or any other group coalition. Gender diversities are visible in prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination.

Culture: Culture is critical to business success, according to the results of the 2013 Culture and Change Management Survey. When more than 2,200 global business people were surveyed to get their take on culture's role in business, it was observed that culture is widely seen as very important and forms part of the strategies or operating models of most organization (Oditia&Egbule,2018). The view on the importance of culture holds true around the world (Cox, 1991; Cox 1994; Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2000)

Education: It is a widespread awareness that people who are educated can execute certain tasks easily, successfully and efficiently than those who are not. This means an individual who is knowledgeable can perform better at tasks that requires that skill and knowledge. Educational background could be seen as the type of formal training or education or even career that a person has acquired over the years. Daniel (2009), discovered that different types of education and levels of education expect different mobility rates. For example, there are various occupations that are available for different sets of people. The type of occupation that is available for someone who has gained some years of work experience but does not have a university degree in a course of study is different from the one who has the required certificate from the university. Based on these, a person's productivity depends on the level of education he/she has acquired. Tracy & David (2011), discovered that organizations and employers usually refuse to employ whom they perceive lack the adequate education,

training, knowledge, skills, experience or expertise to fill up a position within the organization. This signifies that education is very vital to both employers and employees. As such, without adequate or proper education, individuals cannot get employed or even perform well if they are eventually employed into the organization.

V. CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Organizational learning is a course of action by which organizational members are exposed to get their hands on skills and co-opt knowledge essential for the improvement of competence, resources and aptitudes for outstanding performance (Chris, 2013). This definition put forward that organizational learning is driven by knowledge management actions that are shared by members of the organization. The knowledge developed especially through participating in seminars or symposia is not ingenious until utilized (Franklin, 2015). On the other hand, Mylse (2014), advocates that organizational learning is an uninterrupted process through which organization act in response to its environment by making the most use of various skills, knowledge and capabilities aimed at accomplishing competitive advantage. Argrys and Schon (1992), maintained that organizational learning is the outcome of organizational investigation. As a progression of organizational inquisition, employees usually interrelate with experts, that have individuals knowledgeable and experienced in the particular field of endeavour in a bid have to acquire and enhance knowledge (Garvin, 2000). However, Gilley and Maybunich (2000), aligned their views with the presumptions of Argrys and Schon as they contend that organizational learning is a direct product of interface with individuals who have gotten hold of operational skills in the organization.

Organization learning is defined as a process developed in organization where employees recurrently develop their capacity to accomplish results they desire; therefore, by employing this process, new archetype of thinking are cultivated; shared ambitions are freed and employees are taught to learn in groups or teams (Robelo & Gomes, 2002). Organizational learning lay important emphasis on the capacity of organization to acquire, right to use, utilize, and share implicit information that would enable them achieve ascendancy in market place (Norashikin, Amnah, Fauziah, & Noormala, 2013). From the stream of definitions above, this paper views organizational learning as a well-thought-out procedure that creates room for continuous enhancement of employees working potentials and agility as it supports the effective cross-fertilization of ideas and knowledge sharing among workers of a particular organization.

Within the organizational learning discipline, both a theoretical and a practical path exist. The former theoretically conceptualizes organizational learning competences such as single and double-loop learning (Garvin, 1993). However, an ideal learning organization has not been realized yet, which can be attributed to the lack of concrete prescriptions of how to put into practice the competences suggested in literature by scholars overtime (Garvin et al., 2008). Concerning the strategic process of organizational learning, theory has yet to enlighten the work of practitioners with a more instrumental and comprehensive view (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Chiva, Ghauri and Alerge (2014), opine that organizational learning is a well-thought-out procedure through which organizations alter or modify their intellectual models, rules, processes or knowledge, sustaining or enhancing their performance. Organizational learning is aimed at altering organizational processes through targeted activities (Templeton, Lewis & Snyder, 2002). Notably, organizational learning is essential for organizations operating in impulsive environments to respond to unforeseen circumstances more quickly than their competitors, by being more creative and prompt in meeting customer's expectation. Owing to its disposition as a process of developing new perspectives, organizational learning is a source for the development of new organizational knowledge (Cheng, Niu, & Niu, 2014; Chiva et al., 2014). Organizational learning is incessantly gaining significance due to the convolution and dynamic alteration in most business environments (Loermans, 2002). Organizational learning can also be perceived as a management task that involves controlling and planning. This is largely because its areas of focus include organizational strategic creation, capture and internalization of knowledge. However, it is important to note that organizational learning entails the effective management of information in a bid to ensure that it, positively impact on organizations performance (Cheng et al., 2014). In the field of knowledge management, organizational learning is recognized as an important organizational means for continuous improvement of knowledge creation and utilization (Wu & Chen, 2014). Knowledge creation, retention, and transfer processes can be found at the intersection of the complementary knowledge management and organizational learning fields (Reich, 2007; Vera & Crossan, 2007; Wu & Chen, 2014). Understanding individual learning processes is essential in a bid to comprehend the learning process of organizations (Wang & Ahmed, 2003). However, the organizational context is more complex than the individual learning environment. According to Wang and Ahmed (2003), it is not simply a collectivity of individual learning processes but engages interaction between individuals in the organization and interaction between organizations as an entity, also interaction between the organization and its context. Although early researchers considered organizational learning as a simple process, present-day works depict that organizational learning is a richer and more wide-ranging phenomenon (Rerup & Levinthal, 2014). Notwithstanding the agreement that it concerns internal adaptation sparked off by external challenges and competitive environmental pressures, the

concept of organizational learning seems to be both poorly defined or has been theoretically confusing and disordered (Wu & Chen, 2014). This confusing situation might be as a result of outcome of the highly conceptual nature of organizational learning in the relative absence of practical guidance (Reich, 2007; Taylor, Templeton & Baker, 2010). Evidence concerning the relationship between organizational design and organizational learning is known to be limited (Real *et al.*, 2014; Schilling & Fang, 2014).

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING THEORY

This paper acknowledges the existence of research accentuating the differences between organizational learning framework and theory (Crossan, Maurer & White, 2011). Although, the question whether the theory of organizational learning exists remain yet to be answered, this paper uses the term theory to indicate what organizations should master as effective organizational learning. Literature offers diverse theoretical organizational learning perspectives, the paper focuses on elected viewpoints to pull off a valuable trade-off between representativeness and depth of analysis as appropriate for our investigation (Bontis, Crossan, & Hulland, 2002). In a bid to cover a representative set of theories and each theory has its justification for existence, it is contended that the inclusion of selected theories is significant because of their influential character and influence on organizational learning research instead of arguing on the exclusion of particular theories. This was not intended to depreciate theories not included in this selection; rather it is aimed to cover a representative set of theories in the organizational learning domain. We chose the selected theories due to their seminal character and the high impact they have on research in the organizational learning domain. The selected theories include single and double-loop learning, organizational knowledge creation theory, five building blocks (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Nonaka, 1991; Garvins, 1993). They are discussed below:

Single-loop learning: As one of the most cited seminal theories, single-loop is considered important, this is predominantly suitable because it focuses on human behavior through its theory of action perspective. (Lichtenstein, 2000; Lim & Chan, 2004; Remedios & Boreham, 2004), Single-loop learning is an instrumental learning that changes strategies of action or assumptions fundamental to developing action plans in ways that leave the values of a theory of action unaffected (Argyris & Schön, 1996). A case in point is the identification and subsequent correction of defects in a production line. In the Engineering field, it is always essential to modify the respective product specification to avoid the defect in the future, this is essentially the outcome of a single feedback loop. Single-loop learning evaluates existing problems and organizational values and norms to develop desired solution to the challenges faced.

Double-loop learning: if the correction of defect requires alteration of organizational values and norms, then double-loop learning is needed. The double-loop refers to two feedback loops that connect observed effects with strategies and values served by those action plans. Potentially, differing organizational performance requirements could result to conflict among individuals in the organization. Such conflicts can only be resolved by creating new performance strategies, examining trade-offs between divergent perspectives, or in the case of incommensurable requirements, analyzing the individual beliefs underlying these perspectives. A feedback loop exists which connects the detection of error not only to action plans and presumptions of effective performance but the values and norms that define effective performance (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE CREATION THEORY

Many researchers have highlighted that, the dynamic process of knowledge creation is a critical organizational learning constituent (Cheng *et al.*, 2014; Loermans, 2002; Real, Roldán & Leal, 2014). Accordingly, it is essential to contemplate organizational knowledge creation theory, which views organizational learning as a dynamic process of knowledge processes concerning implicit and overt knowledge. Whereas explicit knowledge can be expressed, codified and disseminated using symbols or language in documented form, overt knowledge is highly personal as it is deeply ingrained in an individual's obligation to a definite context (Nonaka, 1991). Tacit knowledge comprises both technical skills and mental models which profoundly shape how we perceive the world around us (Nonaka, 1991). The theory has been considered to have the latent to arouse the next wave of research (Nonaka, 1994). In view of that, it has been widely used by researchers who link practical approaches to organizational learning theory (Basten, Michalik, & Yigit, 2015; Dingsøyr, 2005; Hoegl & Schulze, 2005; Wu, Gordon, & Fan, 2010). The creation of organizational knowledge is seen as a spiral that is continuously repeated in four phases (Nonaka, 1991, 1994; Nonaka & Konno, 1998). The study further discusses the components of organizational knowledge creation theory thus:

Socialization: this refers to the sharing of tacit knowledge among employees in the workplace, for instance, newly employed staff learning by observing and imitating a mentor. It is imperfect concerning organizational knowledge creation because knowledge never becomes explicit and cannot be easily utilized by the overall organization (Dirk, & Haamann, 2018).

Externalization: externalization entails the articulation of tacit knowledge and its transformation into understandable forms that can be comprehended by others especially explicit knowledge; Nonaka & Konno,

1998). This process involves procedure to articulate ideas or images as words, concepts, figurative language such as metaphors, analogies, or narratives, and visuals (Nonaka& Konno, 1998; Dirk, &Haamann, 2018). Externalization entails the translation of highly individualized or specialized professional knowledge into an explicit form.

Combination:Dirk, &Haamann, (2018), opine that explicit knowledge is transformed into more complex and explicit knowledge by recombining, cataloging or classifying the bodies of explicit knowledge held by different individuals. A team's internal knowledge might be combined with knowledge from external sources. Characteristically, blend involves the diffusion of knowledge among the members of an organization, through meetings or computerized communication networks.

Internalization:internalization is the process of convertingexplicit knowledge into the organization's tacit (overt) knowledge(Nonaka& Konno, 1998). Individuals gather explicit knowledge that they make out as germane to their domain to enlarge their tacit knowledge such as the studying process documentation. They extend and reframe their tacit knowledge as documented and verbalized experiences facilitate the internalization of knowledge.

VIII. FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LEARNING

It is known that, the concept of a learning organization enthusiastically supports learning among its members to engender competitive advantages or greater effectiveness and manage conflicts and diversity. This study considers the five building blocks described by Garvin (1993), that organizations need to master for effective organizational learning. Garvin, (1993), in his earlier studies was one of the first known scholars to coin the concept of a learning organization. Garvin aimed to overcome previous literature which he observed as too utopian and unpractical (Easterby-Smith, 1997; Dirk, &Haamann, 2018). The five building blocks include systematic problem solving, experimentation, learning from past experience, learning from others, and transferring knowledge, they are discussed below.

Systematic problem solving: Systematic problem solving involves reliance on scientific methods to diagnose problems (Dirk, &Haamann, 2018). Rather than relying on guesswork, organizations use, for instance, procedures for creating and testing hypotheses. Systematic problem solving is fact based, and decisions are made based on available data rather than assumptions.

Experimentation:Dirk and Haamann, (2018), view experimentation as the systematic search for and testing of new knowledge through a research and development unit of an organization. Tellingly, organizations may choose between ongoing programs or demonstration projects. Ongoing programs aim to gather incremental knowledge through a continuous series of small experiments. Such programs continuously require new ideas and incentives to take risks such as creation of automotive designs. Uncooperatively, demonstration projects are larger, more complex, and usually designed from scratch. They focus on system-wide changes to develop organizational capabilities or to embody principles that organizations aim to adopt holistically.

Past experience:Taking a retrospective approach involves systematic and constant assessment of and learning from past experiences. Lessons learned need to be stored and openly accessible to the members of the organization. However, bearing in mind that failure is the ultimate teacher and enabler of subsequent success, it is important to consider both successes and failures. As reflections of experiences can be perceived as time-consuming and because managers are indifferent or react to failures in a hostile way, learning should occur as a result of careful planning rather than chance (Dirk, & Haamann, 2018).

Learning from others: According to Dirk, &Haamann, (2018), learning from others presumes that new perspectives from external sources can provide powerful insights. A typical example is benchmarking, which refers to the inclusion of ideas from other organizations. It involves the search for best practices aiming to derive recommendations based on thoughtful comparisons with other organizations. Customers provide another source of ideas because they are experts in what they do. In any case, organizations will only learn in a receptive environment, where members of the organization are open to criticism or bad news.

Transferring knowledge: transferring knowledge ensures that learning is not a local affair and that knowledge is spread "quickly and efficiently throughout the organization(Garvin 1993, Dirk & Haamann, 2018). Disseminating knowledge to many individuals help ideas reach maximal effectiveness.Written, oral, and visual reports, as well as site visits and tours are popular mechanisms for knowledge transfer. However, these methods can be problematic because some messages can be difficult to comprehend without direct communication. Although training can transfer knowledge effectively, subsequent application to real-life problems is important.

IX. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

The relationship between workplace diversity and organizational learning has been adequately explored in so many countries but the overall evidence is not strong enough especially in the context of Nigeria. There is high agreement among researchers that social science research in developing countries including

Nigeria is ignored and neglected (Peterside, 2015). Keeping in view of this literature gap, the objective of this paper is to explore the degree of relationship between workplace diversity and organizational learning. More distinctively, the study aims at exploring and analyzing the employees' perception about workplace diversity and whether or not it has effect on their ability to learn in the organization. Although, the views of managers in African organizations generally hold that workers attitude towards diversity and learning is usually poor (Peterside, 2015) as cited in Odika and Egbule (2018).

Ehimare and Ogaga-Oghene (2011), averred that demographic mechanism of workplace diversity allow management to organize work, predicated on liveness, learning, creativeness, and quick decision making prospects innate in a team-work setting. Therefore, workplace diversity suggests to the management, more ability to understand the emotions of employees within the organizations (Daniel, 2002). Organizational learning is a process of collective knowledge construction and changes that are developed and bespoke through practices incorporating not only cognitive but also behavioral and cultural aspects. Knowledge construction implies a process of how it is produced, how it circulates, and how it is institutionalized within a social and historical context that impacts on what has been learned previously and how responses to new events are enlarged (Gherardi, 2000, 2009b; Patriotta, 2003; Takahashi, 2007; Fortis, Maon, Frooman, & Reiner, 2016). Diversity practices refer to substantive organizational efforts to provide an inclusive culture that values differences and promotes opportunities for all employees (Esen, 2005).

The organizational learning investigation process is usually focused on diversity practices, such as the inclusion of place of work diversity, practices which are portrayed as an example of legal pressure for inclusion in organizations. Several authors point out that diversity in organizations does not happen without tension and it is in this regard that learning theory can contribute to understanding how organizations articulate knowledge and develop practices to promote inclusiveness. As Antonacopolou and Chiva (2007), pointed out, the actors' interactions are not only governed by their action, but also by their intentions that are often under tension. Thus, the organization's intention to develop diversity policies can be influenced both by the perceived tension in its environment and by that present in its social interactions. These tensions can give rise to different possibilities for action that amplify their present modes, revealing the political nature of learning and allowing flexibility and different possibilities for the positioning of the organization.

From the considerations presented, it is possible to perceive that the inclusion of practices of diversity in the organizational context requires organizational actors to reflect on their ways of acting. This is because, from the interaction between new entrants, new practices are necessary for organizational integration. For the inclusion of diversity in the work context, the organization can carry out a process of transformation of the attitudes and thoughts of the organization members as a way to take advantage of what diversity can bring in terms of contribution to the organization. In this case, the change of thinking and attitudes for the inclusion of diversity is supported by a learning process, and studying it allows individuals to understand how the organization learns (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). Thus, the implementation of substantive diversity practices is supported by a high-level organizational learning process, implying a flow of knowledge that involves the institutionalization of knowledge about working together with diversity (Barr, Stimpert, & Huff, 1992; Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Many organizations already experienced the need to insert diversity in their work context, so that when they begin to work in other countries, this issue is not so new in their activities and over time, they construct knowledge about diversity insertion. However, in some countries, the insertion of diversity is not a demand and when an organization moves into a new environment, the need to insert diversity into the organizational context can be considered a new demand. The learning process related to diversity practices is different according to the degree of cognitive, cultural, and behavioral change that has occurred, with the possibility of it being of a lower or higher level, single-loop or double-loop or low or high degree (Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Barr *et al.*, 1992).

X. CONCLUSION

From the conceptual and theoretical findings, the effects of workforce diversity on organizational learning are seen to be positively significant. The objectives of this paper have been achieved thus, confirming that there is a significant relationship between workforce diversity (gender, age ethnic and educational diversity) and organizational learning. This means that workforce diversity can have influence on organizational learning. For instance, in terms of educational diversity, the way an employee carries out his/her job can be as a result of the competences he/ she has gained through education, experience, training. Also, age diversity has an effect on organizational learning; an employee can be more productive because he is young and still has the strength and skills to acquire more learning as well as carry out task. From findings, it is discovered that an organization that has a good mix of male and female employees is more likely to perform better than an organization that is dominated by same gender. Reason being that both gender think and act differently and if an organization embraces such diversity, then it is indirectly welcoming different ideas that diversity of the employees will display. Therefore, employee behavior, capacity or ability, their motivation, organizational commitment,

organizational culture are some of the factors that influence and explain the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational learning. Summarily, this study reveals that diversity have a significant positive relationship with organizational learning and therefore, recommend that there is need to empirically validate the outcomes as revealed by this paper.

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