Employee Learning Theories and Their Organizational Applications

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Abstract   *Empirical evidence identifies that organizational success hinges on employees with the required knowledge, skills, and abilities and that employees' effectiveness at learning new skills and knowledge is connected with the kind of learning technique the organization adopts. Given this, this work explored employee learning theories and their organizational applications. Using far-reaching literature survey and extensive theoretical and logical argument and exposition. This paper revealed that cognitive-based approaches, non-cognitive approach and need-based approaches play vital roles in shrinking the occurrence of unwanted behaviors and upturning the occurrence of desired behaviors in the organization. Proper application of the theories can induce positive employee behaviors such as task performance and organizational citizenship behavior and consequently enhance both individual and organizational performance. This work has hopefully contributed to the enrichment of the existing relevant literature and served as a useful guide for stakeholders on how they can stimulate positive employee behaviors and the consequent enhanced organizational performance.*

Key words   Employee learning, employee behavior, employee development, human resource development, learning theory, need theory, cognitive theory

JEL Codes: M0, M1, M5

1. Introduction

Organizational feat cannot come about except through the instrumentality of employees who are equipped with the required knowledge, skills, and competencies (KSAs) needed for the execution of organizational strategy and planning (Fu, 2013; Ismail, 2014; and Ismail *et al.*, 2015a). Employees' effectiveness at learning new skills and knowledge is connected with the kind of learning technique the organization adopts. Theories of learning and human resource development are useful in piloting the workers in developing their careers. Organizations can improve their employees by giving them the access to a broad spectrum of courses, workshops and self-paced alternatives. These will enhance their development and at the same time enhance organizational productivity (Duggan and Media, 2013).

Like in the theory of behaviorism, it is perceived that positive and negative reinforcement influence learning in the organization. Learning that is associated with reinforcement is assumed to induce change in behavior and when there is change in behavior, then it means that the theory is effective. This strategy can be adopted to make employees adopt the new policies and procedures. Similarly, in the cognitivism learning theory, the focus would be on enhancing mental processes; rather than physical actions. This learning theory indicates that the main role is to help workers to develop their knowledge. This approach can be used to embolden their workers to develop their strategic thinking practices, memory and problem-solving skills (Duggan and Media, 2013).

The notion that theory is antithetical to practice is a relic of a theoretical thinking. HRD scholars had underscored the importance of theory, and according to Torraco (1997), theory basically explicates the phenomenon the way it works. Building a theory involves lucid descriptions, details, and exemplifications of observed or experienced phenomena which are produced, tested, and improved (Lynham, 2000).

Given this explication, this research work aims to explore employee learning theories and their organizational applications.

2. Literature review

2.1. Reinforcement theory

Reinforcement theory was initiated by B.F. Skinner which referred to as Behaviorism or Operant Conditioning which is still universally taught in psychology today. The focus of the theory is that an individual's behavior is a function of its consequences (Management Study Guide, 2013). The evolution of behaviorism stemmed from the dissatisfaction with the introspective techniques of humanism and psychoanalysis in which some researchers were displeased with the absence of directly observable phenomena that could be examined and experimented with. However, Skinner took a different direction by relating his thoughts on adjusting motivation through numerous stimuli, industries such as business, government, education, prisons, and mental institutions to achieve a wider perception of human behavior. Determining why an individual

behave the way he does, Skinner saw no role for individual's intentions or goals in it (Banaji, 2011). Skinner believed that external behavior and its environment are of importance. Skinner's major contribution to psychological science was the concept of reinforcement, formalized in his principles of operant conditioning. Also investigated by reinforcement theory are the environmental factors that affect human behavior. Reinforcement theory has four most important approaches which are: (i) positive reinforcement ii negative reinforcement, (iii) extinction, and (iv) punishment.

2.2. Application of reinforcement theory in the workplace

Skinner's principles of behavior modification informed that behavior is determined by its consequences. It has been agreed upon by the management practitioners that applied psychology techniques can be used to resolve numerous issues in the organizations. Skinner (1973), underscored the significance of recognizing the desired consequence, which will stimulate the desired behavioral response. Since the inception Skinner's finding in 1969, reinforcement theory has been extensively researched and applied in the industrial setting to shrink the occurrence of unwanted behavior and upturn the occurrence of desired behavior. The principles of behavior modification in proffering solution to management issues such as absenteeism and tardiness have been proved by the studies of applied reinforcement theory, they can also help in enhancing productivity of employees (Raj *et al.*, 2006 and Agashi, 2017).

The applicability of reinforcement theory in the organization reflects in the studies like Kadlub (2009). A typical example can be found in the case of Snowfly. Snowfly is a new establishment that schematizes, employs and manages workforce incentive programs. Reinforcement theory which consists of four themes; instant recognition, appropriate incentive rewards, accountability, and positive reinforcement was adopted by the company to enhance motivation of the workers (Kadlub, 2009). However, punishment, otherwise known as applied reinforcement theory of positive punishment (Hockenbury and Hockenbury, 2010) has been used more than other types of reinforcement (Waird, 1972). Naturally, diminishing unwanted behaviors can be done using punishment rather than offering a reward and it has been in use for long. However, constant use of punishment to enhance performance makes it becomes a reward (Waird, 1972). Reward entails a fact that an employee is not punished for not involving in undesired behavior but the behavior that is being reinforced is diminishing undesired behavior instead of truly making effort to upturn desirable behavior. Positive reinforcement is connected with enhancing desirable behavior, performance in the organization.

2.3. Pros and cons of reinforcement theory

Reinforcement theory can suggest hints to workers' motivation. It focuses on the external environment and uses the analysis of the environment to explain and control workers' behavior.

Glasser (1990) opined that motivation can be diminished in related activities because the artificial can hinder employee's feeling of self-determination. The aspects of problem-solving and thinking processing among others are not addressed by reinforcement theory. The fact is that researches of behaviorism were majorly carried out on animals while the environmental stimuli are considered to be the modifier of behavior and not on any internal factors that may be present (Funder, 2010; Weegar and Pacis, 2012 and Baum, 2017).

3. Social learning theory

Social learning theory, propounded by Albert Bandura, the social learning theory underscores the indispensability of surveying and modeling people's behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions. It is a theory that concentrates on learning by way of observation and modeling. The theory originally evolved from behaviorism was the source from which social learning theory emanated and today it has involved some ideas of cognitivists and consequently it is given another name which is social cognitive learning. Social learning theory also focuses on environmental and cognitive factors that interact in order to impact human learning and behavior. It opined that individual learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 2006).

3.1. Application of the theory to organization

Rewards, according to social learning theory, cannot be the exclusive drive that enhances employee's motivation. Motivation can also be enhanced by some other elements such as feelings, beliefs, ethics, and feedback. Learning occurs through three ways; indirect experience, oral persuasion, and physiological situations. Modeling, or the scenario in which individual see someone's behaviors, embrace and implement them as his, support the learning process as well as psychological situations and the perceptive process.

4. Goal setting theory

Goal theory came into limelight five decades ago and since then it has been most-studied, applied, and established theory of work motivation in the realm of industrial and organizational psychology. The early stage of the theory revolves around

the study of stages of aspiration advanced by Kurt Lewin. Then it was furthered by Dr. Edwin Locke by researching on goal setting theory in 1960's. The research indicated that there is general connection between goal setting and enhanced production performance. A goal denotes the purpose of an act or task in which an individual determinedly wishes to accomplish (Locke and Latham, 2002; 2006). Goal setting involves a deliberate activity of instituting stages of performance in order to obtain anticipated consequences. According to the goal setting theory, motivation is sourced from the aspiration and plan to accomplish a goal. Normally, a person or a team that perceive that his/their present performance fall short of accomplishing the set goal would be stimulated to either improve his/their efforts or alter his/their strategy (Locke and Latham, 2006).

4.1. Goal setting theory conditions

A successful goal that would stimulate motivation via the four mechanisms mentioned above is pre-conditioned to meet certain stipulations. These stipulations are:
- Goal acceptance/goal commitment;
- Goal specificity;
- Goal difficulty, and
- Feedback on progress toward the goal

A. Goal Acceptance/Goal Commitment

The acceptance of a goal determines whether an individual will be motivated through the goal or not. Goal acceptance is the first precondition for the goal to be motivating. Furthermore, the level of one's willpower in accomplishing an accepted goal constitutes what is called goal commitment. Importance attached to the accepted goal and self-efficacy is crucial to goal commitment (Locke and Latham, 2002; 2006).

B. Goal Specificity

Specificity and measurability are the indispensable features of a typical goal which must give answer to who, what, when, where, why, and how of the anticipations of the goal. Specificity and measurability aspect of goal offer an outer correspondent like time, space, increment, etc. A goal of high specificity overtly impacts the performance the more and consequently gives rise to higher job performance by the worker as against elusive or nonconcrete goals (Locke and Latham, 2002).

C. Goal Difficulty

In view of the difficulty, it can be asserted that goals are an effective way of motivation. A high-set goal enhances good performance while such goal should be set low to be able to accomplish it (PSU, 2012). Integrity should also be taken in to cognizance while setting high performance goals. An individual can display untruthfulness if he doesn't accomplish his goal. Putting up too-much high goals is detrimental to motivation and commitment as it also give rooms for a culture of corruption, untruthfulness, and cutting corners (Bennett, 2009).

D. Feedback

Goal's success is determined by the feedback given as it also sustains goal commitment. Feedback keeps everybody abreast of the progress or otherwise as regards the set goal and this will make it hard analyze the extent of the exertion needed for the successful accomplishment of the goal (Sorrentino, 2006). Moreover, through feedback areas of weaknesses in the present goals can be sighted by an individual or group of individuals which give room for amendment that can be made (Smith and Hitt, 2005). Flexibility is an essential feature for both the goal and goal maker (Bennett, 2009). Setting more challenging goals can make the feedback effective if it is centralized on such goal (Locke and Lantham, 1979). Putting the feedback together, it is indicated that the level of performance of a person, and what such person can do differently in order to have better performance. Also, like goals, feedback should be specific to convey productive information regarding meeting objectives. Feedback make employee be aware that their tasks are being assessed and recognition are given to job well done. Goal setting is commonly utilized in the organizations as a way to enhance and keep up task performance.

4.2. Strengths and weaknesses of the goal setting theory

According to Locke and Latham (2002), goal-setting theory becomes famous theory and widely-used among organizational psychologists because there are all-encompassing empirical studies that put weight behind it and because of the theory's virtual straightforwardness as against other theories. Goal setting theory success transcends work force: Lock and Latham

have utilized their all-embracing investigation to define the high extent of generalizability, such that it is useable to individual worker, teams, organizational entities, and the whole organizations" (Lock and Latham, 2002).

5. Need theories

The perception that individual's motivation originates from his yearning to accomplish a need constitutes what are known as needs theories. The theories portend that unsatisfied needs can encourage and drive individual as in some situations, satisfaction of needs should be hierarchical whereby some lower needs come first and followed by the higher needs in terms of fulfillment. Defining the motivation, it can be generally stated that motivation refers to the aspiration to accomplish a goal, pooled with the vigor, will power and chance to accomplish it. Needs theories comprise of Hierarchy of Needs theory which was propounded by Abraham H. Maslow in 1943, Existence Related Growth (ERG) Theory by Alderfer, C. P., and Need Theory by McClelland, D. in 1960s, while building off of work was developed by Murray, H. A.

5.1. Hierarchy of needs of Abraham Maslow

This famous theory of motivation came into existence in 1943. It was propounded by Abraham Maslow. Maslow's article titled "A Theory of Human Motivation" it was portended that the first important needs to be accomplished for someone who is devoid of everything in his life are the physiological needs (Maslow, 1943). Five arrays of needs constituted the theoretical framework proposed by Maslow in the article. Two classifications were formed out of these five arrays of needs: basic needs and higher-order needs.

Normally, the theory of needs developed by Maslow is always captured in a pyramidal shape in which the basic needs are situated at the bottom while the higher needs at the top. This portends the order of importance of the needs. Physiological needs are the most vital and widest among them and were placed at the base of the pyramid (Redmond, 2010).

Based on Maslow's perception, fulfillment progression portends that the accomplishment of the higher-order needs is determined by the accomplishment of the basic needs (Redmond, 2010). In the later time, Maslow made some adjustment to his hierarchy of needs by changing the position of the last platform and replacing it with three new platforms. These include:

- Cognitive Needs: this form the fifth platform or stage and it indicate the need for knowledge and meaning.
- Aesthetic Needs: this forms the sixth platform and it embodies the acknowledgement of beauty, form, and balance, including the actions that are connected with seeking it.
- Self-actualization Needs: this is the seventh platform. Formally it was in the platform five. This platform, according to Huitt (2004), constitutes the peak rank of needs. These needs involve perpetual concentration on personal development, problem solving, life pleasure and ultimate experiences for oneself (Huitt, 2004).
- Transcendence Needs: This is the last platform added. It refers to the need to assist other individuals to accomplish their potentials and self-actualization (McLeod, 2007).

5.2. Applicability of the Maslow's theory in the organization

Hierarchical theory, propounded by Maslow, is a useful tool in instilling the motivation into workers which will consequently influence the behavior of the employees. Several studies on HRD, have affirmed that employees' behavior are shaped and affected by both external and internal factors. Among the internal factors is motivation. Manager should perceive that lower-level needs should be given preference above higher-level needs. This will enhance organizational effectiveness in meeting those needs. Meeting the physiological needs involves a reasonable competitive wage, lunch/coffee breaks, fitness facilities, and creation of company cafeterias so that the employee feels comfortable that his/her basic needs are satisfied. In addition, good working condition and safe working environment constitute a good part of it.

5.3. Strengths and weaknesses of Abraham Maslow

Although it is devoid of confirmative proof, Maslow's need theory is intuitive in nature. This means that the theory underscores the awareness of emotions and this is the major strengths of the theory. This attracts the practitioners to adopt the theory. However, it is hard to have pragmatic and empirical support for Maslow's theory, and this is considered as the theory's weaknesses. This is just because the theory is devoid of specificity. Also, the theory and its elements' definitions are not homogenous. For instance, self-esteem and self-actualization can be of much dissimilar in terms of meanings to divergent cultures. Included is the fact that the theory was formed in the American context and thus, it cannot be applicable everywhere like in the collective societies; in this kind of society self-esteem is somewhat insignificant (Gambrel and Ciani, 2003). It is noteworthy here that Maslow had the intention of modifying his theory due to these weaknesses. Later, the need of self-transcendence was introduced.

6. ERG theory

Alderfer, C. P. (1969), for the first time propounded the ERG Theory of Motivation. The ERG theory is an expansion on Maslow's theory by giving more rooms for more flexibility of movement between needs. The levels of need were integrated and diminished into three while it gives consideration to individual differences. Equally, it gives room for pursuance of divergent needs at the same time.

1. Existence Needs: This contains physiological and safety needs in the Maslow's theory
2. Relatedness Needs: This refers to social relationships and external esteem
3. Growth Needs: This comprises of internal esteem and self-actualization.

In Maslow's theory, fulfilled needs is no more motivational while in ERG theory, it is asserted that fulfilled needs becomes more significant. Maslow's theory varies from ERG theory in the aspect of the direction of meeting the needs.

According to Hunter, Rauschenberger and Schmitt (1990), dynamism is a great strength for ERG theory. It acknowledges individual differences and the factors that can impact individual needs from time to time. Thus, the theory proffers solution to analyzing the dynamics of human needs that usually transpire in the organization. The theory also stresses flexibility.

However, the flexibility which is allowed by the theory can be its weak point as there is dearth of studies on it. Whereas inadequate studies on a particular theory can subject it to skepticism of the real value of the theory. Unlike Malsow's theory, ERG theory posits that concurrent satisfaction of employees' multiple needs encourages and stimulates employee and consequently enhance their performances. Also, it portends that it is not necessary to meet needs in a given order; there can be movement back and forth from one need to another.
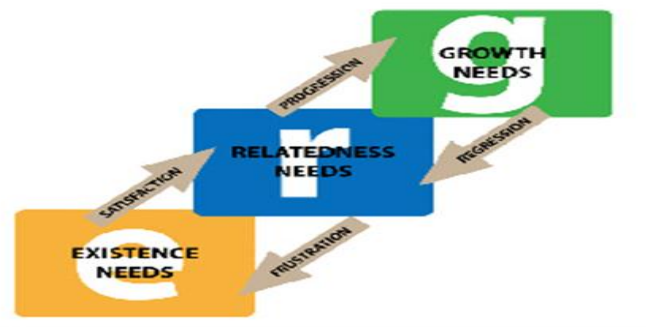

Figure 1. ERG theory

Source: Redmond (2010)

6.1. Need theory of McClelland

This need theory was propounded by McClelland. He, the developer, recognized three needs as stimulating and encouraging elements. This was portended in the titled "The Achieving Society". The theory recognizes that every individual has divergent degree of needs.

6.2. Needs according to the theory

Achievement Motivation Needs: individual accountability; challenging situation, yet-to-accomplished goals; and performance feedback are attractive to the individual that possesses a high need for achievement (Stuart-Kotze, 2009).

Authority/Power Motivation – people that love to have authority and power are kin to exert influence on other people. These kinds of people would prefer having control, motivation personal status and prestige.

Affiliation Motivation – an individual that loves to affiliate and associate with others are sensitive others' needs (Stuart-Kotze, 2009).

More than Maslow's and ERG theory, McClelland's theory is very useful (McClelland, 1965). This assertion is supported by the fact that numerous empirical studies support the theory. The theory, unlike Maslow's and ERG theory, recognizes the acquisition and learning nature of the needs, it doesn't believe that needs are inborn. It portends that learning of needs can be at the younger age and can also come up in people. McClelland's perception of need for achievement is connected with positive organizational behaviors and performance. Conversely, the theory is perceived to be devoid of predictive power in respect of entrepreneurship. Direct connection is not found between entrepreneurial intent and the need for achievement because of some stimulating factors that induce entrepreneurial intent (Oyugi, 2014). Additionally, cultures with its different connotations have some important influences on the need for achievement. To some people, failure is viewed as a learning experience that permits the chance to progress and develop to be sturdier in the aspects that triggered the hindrance. However, some people concentrate on the regressive side of failing to accomplish.

7. Expectancy theory

Expectancy theory, otherwise known as process theory, explicates the reason for giving preference for one behavior over another. This theory was originally propounded by Victor Vroom of the Yale School of Management in 1964. Redmond (2010) observed that a person that expects desired consequence would be stimulated and encouraged to take a decision that will give rise to that outcome. An employee that has belief in his sets of goals would be galvanized and stimulated to achieve such goals since he believes those goal can lead to desired outcome which will enhance him good reward. The aspiration to fulfill a need is capable enough to make the work valuable.

Considering the connection between effort and performance, managers should assign a task that is quite challenging to avoid dullness, frustration and minimal performance on the part of the workers. Managers should also be aware of divergent skills and abilities of the workers while it is equally necessary to assign tasks based on the capability and competencies of individual employee. This is because an employee who perceives he cannot accomplish the task assigned to him would be demotivated and the connection between E-P would be fragile. It should also be perceived by the managers that employees differ in terms of self-esteem in accomplishing assigned task and here confidence of the employee is germane to be able come up with good performance that will bring about aspired outcome and reward.

7.1. Application of expectancy theory in the organization

Expectancy theory can be used to influence employee behavior. Employee would be motivated to involve in HRD activities if he expects that it will benefit him by enhancing his performance. Employee will feel encouraged to attend training if he expects that it will enhance his knowledge and if he knows that the outcome of his efforts will be rewarded (Werner et al., 2009). However, expectancy theory was criticized for utilizing between-subject strategies. This is because VIE theory was propounded to analyze the dissimilarities within the individual and not across divergent subjects, considering these dissimilarities, it does not result to valid results (Redmond, 2010).

8. Adult learning theory

Lieb (1991) opined that perceiving the best method through which the adult can lean forms the basis for being a successful coach. Adult learning theory, otherwise known as andragogy is a theory that came up with an array of assumptions in respect of the methods through which the adults pass through learning. Adult learning approach stresses the importance of learning process. The theory proposes that learning approach should not be instructive, it should rather be problem-based and two-way and that the teacher-learner relationship should be egalitarian (Fidishun 2000).

Knowles, who is an American expert and theorist of adult education, recognized for adult learning six principles. They are as follow:

- Adults have the feature of being internally inspired and enthused and self-directed
- Adults have the feature of integrating life experiences and knowledge with learning experience
- Adults focus on goal they set
- Adults focus on the germaneness of the learning
- Adults are practical
- Adult learners are fond of being regarded

8.1. Application of Knowles' adult learning principles

Adults are internally motivated and self-directed. In a situation whereby information, ideas or actions are felt to be imposed on the adults who are learners. Such adults would defy such learning (Fidishun, 2000). HRD executives should ensure that training to be given to the senior employees should be more toward self-directed and responsible learning. Also, it should promote the learners' internal motivation to acquire the knowledge or skills.

Senior employees should be given a chance to apply their standing kitty of knowledge and experience acquired from their life experiences to their new learning experiences. This can be achieved through surveying their interests and past experiences, be it personal experience or others, and then help in integrating those experiences in to the new learning.

As cited by Fidishun (2000), Knowles (1980) observed that establishing a need to learn for the purpose of proffering solution to a particular problem in the organization can stimulate the senior employees in the organization to learn because they are goal-oriented. It would be imperative to establish the link and the relevance of what is being learnt by the senior employee to what they are to accomplish. This would boost their commitment to the learning. Senior employees in the organization would, due to their life and working experiences they have acquired over time, like learning that is task-centralized or problem-centralized (Sessa and London, 2015).

9. Information processing theory

The information processing theory is an approach that is useful in the research aspects like cognitive development, neuroscience, social learning, and artificial intelligence. The theory is mental and perceptive related. This is associated with a perception of how sensation-based or sensory information is being processed by the mind of human being. The theory proposes that information serves as an input from the environment and it passes through mental processes using sensory organs. These mental and sensory processes involve many paths based on the responsiveness, encoding, recognition, and storage. The volume of information to be processed by the cognitive systems is determined by the central executive feature, which are more primitive sensory areas of the brain. This central executive feature will firstly receive the information from the environment and then processes it, it will also control which of the environmental contribution will be processed. The theory it observes real time reactions to obtainable inducements and the way human mind process and transmutes the information it receives from the environment.

Although no one among the theorist had made a claim of developing the theory, researches have shown that a unanimous model was polished by Atkinson and Shiffrin in 1968. This is referred to as the modal model. The emergence of the theory (Information processing theory) can be traced to the cognitive upheaval that occurred in the late 1950's when the computer was designed. Cognitive processes were made in line with the computer method data processing.

9.1. Applicability of the information processing theory in the organization

The theory is applicable to many areas among which are business organizations. In the research conducted by Rogers *et al.* (1999), Information Processing Theory was adopted to analyze and designate organizational behavior. The theory was also adopted to depict an approach that will designate the successful and unsuccessful business strategies. The organizational constituents are said to be receiving the input (information) from the market. The constituents of the organization will then process the information from the market. In the process, the gatekeepers will scrutinize the information to select the most appropriate one from the information for the organization. Then, it will be integrated into the current culture. This information can also be used to determine and design the program for employee development and employee learning.
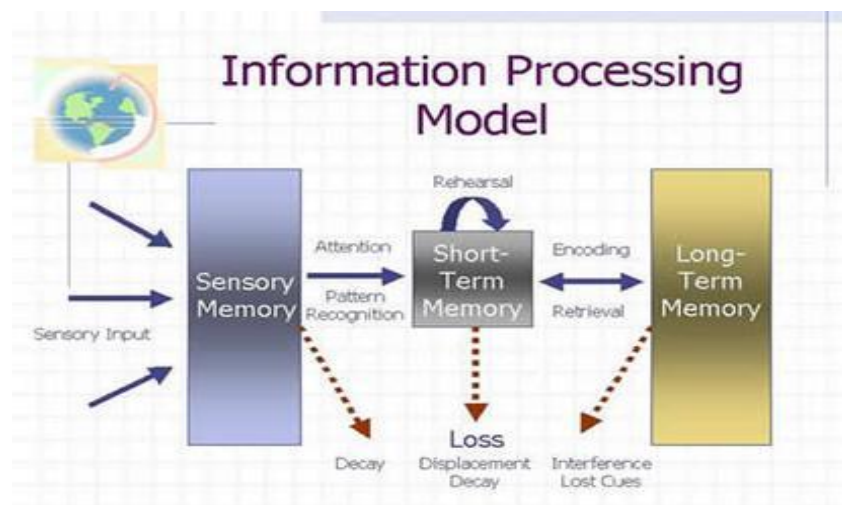

Figure 2. Information Processing Model

9.2. Implications for HRD theory research and practice

Times are indisputable changing. How organizations solve the complexities of the world. As organizations pay to innovation to sustain competitive advantage, since their success likes on sustainability. It is highly imperative for the firm to hire HRD experts and provide training for their staffs in order to compete in the business environment. Waite (2014) synthesis of different literatures and conclude that HRD need to integrate HRD concepts so that organizations may overcome resistance to change and thrive while reaching a higher purpose to find the win-win. i.e. minimize cost at all time and maximize revenue. Marten 2002's conceptual classification, the use of storytelling for better understanding of the intricacies of creativities in organizations produce a powerful framework for HRD researchers and a priceless learning tool for HRD experts. Ehlen *et al.* (2014) hinted that it is essential to treat innovation as an organic process and stick to organizational

objectives. However, successful innovation will be achieved via rigid organizational structures. It is imperative for HRD experts to more organic role and improve staffs' effort to be productive than undertaking unplanned interventions.

Kearney et al. (2014) studied micro-firms in a volatile industry and economy. They hinted that leadership; strategic thinking; problem solving and people relationships are four criteria for small firms' managerial capability and the interaction of these capabilities and resource in process mediated by dynamic capabilities and resource based. HRD interventions is important to achieve organizational goals since enhancement of their managerial capabilities, especially when interacted with key resources, enhance innovation within micro firms, especially hotels, which, in turn enhances the overall performance of these organizations.

9.3. Criticisms against the information processing theory

The models in the Information Processing Theory do not give consideration to concurrent or comparable processing. They consider the mental and cognitive processing in a simplistic way. Those models also consider the processing of the information as mostly a direct procedure. Furthermore, the information processing theory is criticized for similarizing human cognitive system to computer system. This is disgusting to some people and in real fact computer programs cannot mimic and replicate full cognitive system of human being. Also, although the computer built-in models which are connected with this theory are greatly compound, they cannot consider all shades of human cognition. Likewise, the theory fails to recognize the important progressive changes in the human cognition (Rogers *et al*., 1999). The theory does not take into cognizance the divergence of individual and the divergence in the people's culture.

10. Conclusions

In this write-up, efforts have been made to explicate HRD and theories that are connected with employee learning. Those theories that were explicated are reinforcement theory, social learning theory, goal theory, need theories, expectancy theory, adult learning theory, and information processing theory. Expectancy theory, goal setting theory, social learning theory, and adult learning theory are cognitive-based approaches while Maslow's theory, ERG theory and Herzberg's theory are need-based approaches. Reinforcement theory has to do with external forces and therefore it is a non-cognitive approach. All these theories play vital roles in influencing employee behavior in the organization. The ultimate goal of HRD is to influence employee behavior (task performance and organizational citizenship behavior) to enhance both individual and organizational performance and to enable both to achieve their goals. Therefore, it can be concluded that all the aforementioned theories are very useful in influencing employee behavior. Scholars and researchers have conducted their studies on these theories in relation to business organizations and HRD functions in the organizations and they are found very useful in influencing employee behavior which will in turn enhance organizational performance.

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