

## **Creating the Difference: Making Shared Experience Meaningful at the Workplace**

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### **Abstract**

*The conjecture made in this paper is that an organizational network can advance positive dialogue to make ends meet in successful enterprise. Proponents of this assumption argue that a group of individuals from the same entrepreneurship can champion organization. They propound that the diffusion of technology can be effective through mediation by an accredited agent such as a knowledge community that possesses the ability to monitor measure and evaluate the required performance and detail trace information referencing accepted standards and procedures. The agreement can be used to create the competitive advantage successfully. Using the theory of situated cognition and international development assignment to create successful human rights practices as case study, the paper examine how in-situ observations could be used to draw data which can be analyzed to understand situated cognition and how it can be applied to build the capability required for organization to interact effectively with its environment. The study concluded that human rights organizations are better position to become more successful if they partner with the local community in co-constructing a shared human rights vision.*

**Keywords:** Creating the difference, Shared experience, meaningful, workplace

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

A community of practice (COP) share a profession especially when the members are highly motivated to exhibit knowledge about the things they are interested in. In organizational studies, Lave (1988) was the first person to

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propose the concept of COP. However, few decades ago, Wenger (2016) an educational theorist, contributed to the definition of COP. In organizational setting, COP can evolve naturally as a result of members' common interest in a particular domain. In other word, COP can be created deliberately with the goal of gaining knowledge related to a specific field (Friedmann, 2020). It is through the process of sharing information and experiences with the group that members learn from each other, and have an opportunity to develop personally and professionally (Crebert *et al.*, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991)

Luckmann (1966) viewed COP as a group, preferable from the same organization, who meet regularly to initiate, diffuse and share the knowledge about the things they are passionate about. They propounded that the COP can be a team drawn from the same entity to craft the practices necessary to make the difference. Their central concept was that people and groups interacting in a social system create, over time, concepts or mental representations of each other's' actions, and that these concepts eventually become habituated into reciprocal roles played by the actors in relation to each other (Venkatraman & Venkatraman, 2018). When these roles are made available to other members of the organization to replicate the reciprocal interactions became the accepted practices and procedures (Friedmann, 2020).

Parsons (2016) considered that embracing of technology into educational settings has changed the method of teaching and learning instruction in recent years (Rainer *et al.*, 2020). Parson (2016) highlights the importance and the use of information in classrooms and also showcases how these devices facilitate teaching and learning process. Stein and Graham (2020) indicate that “blended learning” is an education system that integrates online digital teaching with traditional face-to-face classroom method of teaching. De Paepe *et al.*, (2018) emphasize the distinctions and interactions between mobile and blended

education are designed for stakeholders who are interested in the effective implementation of modern information systems in on-job training and workshops to improve productivity.

Mupepi *et al.* (2018) describes social constructs as methods and techniques derived from positive psychology which are applied to create the synergy necessary to make ends meet or solve problems in varied organizations. Mupepi *et al.* (2018) reiterated that the process involves effective inter-personal communications; and, the dynamics can lead to the formulation and implementation of highly productive teams. The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2014) also defines social construct as a social mechanism, phenomenon, or category created and developed by society; a perception of an individual, group, or an idea that is built through cultural or social practice. Social constructs can therefore be considered as the by-products of countless human choices, rather than laws related to human judgment (Popper, 2020).

According to Senge (2006); Buchanan & Badham (2020), the power of a shared mindset is argued to be the basis for successful innovation. Business innovation lies in engaging diverse variables in the environment in a replicable process to forecast the future, employ new ways to create value and finding the best way of implementing the conceived ideas. Senge (2006) makes clear assertion that the only sustainable competitive advantage is a company's ability to learn faster than the competition. Creating a shared mindset in an organization is a long term commitment in every organization which must begin at entry point or recruitment into the company. Senge (2006); D'Aveni *et al.* (2010) project that an integrated corporate framework, which is structured around personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Using ideas that originate in fields from science to spirituality. Senge explained why the learning

organization mattered and offered basic tools for putting into practice organizations with a shared mission.

Mupepi *et al.* (2018) draw on Alfred Schultz (1899-1959) to derive the term social construction in organizational studies. Mupepi *et al.* (2018) in their submission interrogates the viability of social construction as very important variable that facilitate meaningful learning and decision-making. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued that the centrality of social constructs was on the capacity of groups to produce explicit knowledge necessary in growing winning organizations. In the discourse, organizational reality can be projected and developed by a group of people from the same organization who share the same vision (Griffin, Phillips, Gully, Creed, Gribble & Watson, 2020). The meeting could be either face-to-face or virtual at any time. Scholars percolate ideas about how to grow successful enterprises. For example, Kasemsap (2017) identify talent management and human capital as essential in successful global enterprises. Creativity and innovation is associated with learning and the ability to embrace change very quickly. Kasemsap (2017) reiterated that talent could be described as the collective knowledge and abilities possessed by the people doing the work. Knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and technology can be configured in the value creation process to produce the goods demanded by the customers.

### ***Situated cognition***

Dewey (1938) was the first scholar who developed the theory of situated cognition. The theory posits that knowing is inseparable from doing by arguing that all knowledge is situated in activity bound to social, cultural and physical contexts.” The situate perspective concentrates on interactive systems in which individuals interact with one another and physical and representational systems (Levi & Askay, 2020). Research takes place *in situ* or inside the organization

and in real-world settings or emic or outside the environment of the organization, reflecting assumptions that knowledge is constructed within specific contexts which have specific situational affordances (Angouri, 2018; Dewey, 1938).

Robertson *et al.* (2020) and Brown *et al.* (1989) assert that a purposeful way of collaborating on new information which they called situated cognition focuses on bridging the gaps between the crafts training and workshops. The cognitive apprenticeship model is erected on an adaptation of the traditional and historic model of learning and teaching through apprenticeship (De La Paz *et al.*, 2017). It sets forth a general framework for the design of learning environments. In later research Joshi (2013) suggested that crafts or engineering training produced technicians or engineers who become the backbone of the industry. It is the responsibility of organizations to promote the quality of this outcome to increase production, manufacture quality products to meet the expectation of the market. By examining the intersections of experiential learning, situated cognition and learning, communities of practice and culture learning, a knowledge community can examine how in-situ observations Natarajan (2017) could be used to draw data which can be analyzed to understand situated cognition and how it can be applied to build the capability required for organization to interact effectively with its environment.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Lave (1988) suggested that most researchers in human cognition concentrate on solving problems and therefore limited their studies to the laboratory. As a result, it has been difficult to account for complex mental processes and their place in culture and history (Ryle & Kerr, 2020). Lave (1988) therefore shifted the paradigm to the analysis of one particular form of cognitive activity, - arithmetic problem-solving - out of the laboratory into the domain of everyday

life. In so doing, Lave demonstrated how mathematics in the real world like all thinking, was shaped by the dynamic encounter between the culturally endowed mind and its total context. Both inlay human subject and the world within which it acts. Lave's research focused on mundane daily activities such as grocery shopping for 'best buys' in the supermarket, dieting, and so on. Innovative in its method, fascinating in its findings, the research is above all significant in its theoretical contributions.

Cosentino (2011) and Buchanan & Badham (2020) place emphasis on the changing market insight roles in evidence in contemporary organizations. This remains an important area of organizational practice that arguably does not get enough attention from individuals outside of the traditional market research professional silos. Cosentino (2011) shrewdly records that gone were the days of the lone wolf, single method, market researcher in the new world of big data, improving Information Technology solutions, social media, with *cognitively grounded* consumers. Cosentino does a helpful job of helping to pin down the trends such as new social media and noting their impact on market insights activities. For example, such change has pervaded all organizations and institutions including the Whitehouse where the seating president decides to twit what was traditionally press released.

### ***Local and international alliances***

Current successful alliances include the Japanese Mazda Corporation and Ford Motors Inc.; General Motors and Swedish auto manufacturer SAAB and many others. An alliance is a combination of situated stakeholder akin to a knowledge community (Earl, 2001). An alliance can facilitate ongoing relationships in building the capability required to effectively exploit the markets and progress a successful business. Liu and Kuo (2006) argue that alliances are designed to draw cross-theory perspectives by combining four theories which are agency

theory, resource-dependent theory, resource-based theory, and knowledge-based theory. They suggest that the combination of different stakeholders allow the exploration of the impact of inter-organizational strategy on organizational value-based decision-making model and intellectual capital. Their study revealed that when there is an inter-organizational agency problem, it will further increase the agency cost, and impact on the organizational value-based decision of inter-organizational strategic alliance in the future.

### ***Factors influencing International alliance***

International alliances are influenced by political considerations such trade agreements or technology transfer agreements between multinational corporations home governments and those of the recipients of the innovation. Prange (2010) propounds that the international cooperation have increased knowledge transfer and innovation in developing economies such as those of South Africa or Botswana. As a result, companies increasingly need to create new resources by engaging in alliances with various partners either local or international (Dentoni *et al.*, 2020). However, high failure rates of strategic alliances imply that the degree of a company's collaboration success is related to the level of its alliance capability (O'Dwyer & Gilmore, 2018).

### ***Positive scholarship***

In Mupepi *et al.* (2008) the employment of positive psychology of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has been successful in determining and sustaining desirable goal. Using AI will enable deep change to occur. Studies have revealed that AI plays integral roles in organizational transformation that has revolutionized how change is introduced and managed. The methodology complete change management process equipped with tools for measurement and evaluation of culture in organizations (Khalil & Belitski, 2020).The method comprises a Four-Dimension Cycle (Four-D Cycle) as its technological hub for determining

organizational needs, continued co-constructing of a shared vision, and developing concerted efforts in fulfilling desirable destiny. Using AI as the intervention of choice, this paper draws a discourse that focuses on getting the organizational needs the first time; a successful implementation of long-lasting change is desirable.

### ***Competency***

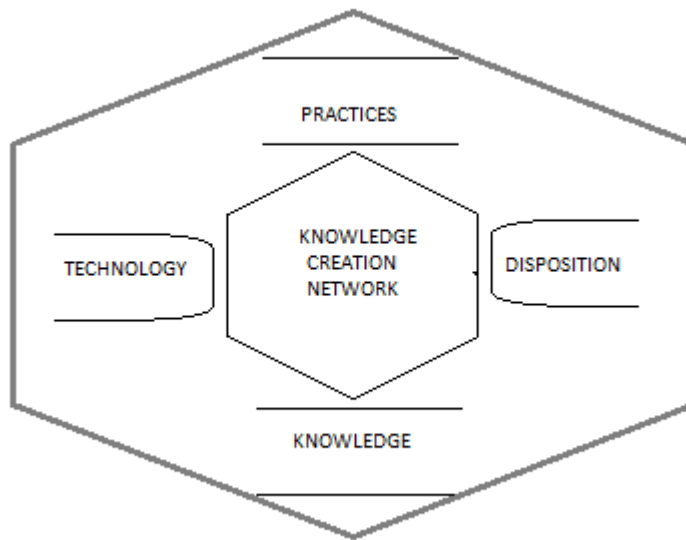
Spady (1977) defines CBE as a data-based, adaptive, performance-oriented set of integrated processes that facilitate, measure, record, and certify within the context of flexible time parameters the demonstration of known, explicitly stated, and agreed upon learning outcomes that reflect successful functioning in life roles. According to Mupepi (2017) competency-based education (CBE) as a popular innovation being explored and implemented by most institutions of higher education across the globe. The work currently being carried out is centered on strategies for developing and implementing CBE courses and programs. The major concerned areas of effort currently include development of new administrative and technical infrastructures required for CBE, including separating administrative functions away from the traditional credit-hour system; unbundling of the faculty role; and development of next-generation learning management systems. Yet relatively less effort has been paid to the identification of the competencies as a field. While many articles and case studies discuss the identification of competencies, many describe this step in general or vague terms using language such as, the CBE development team worked with industry experts to identify competencies, but detail as to actual techniques is lacking. Advances in technology have become marketing tools in successful organization. The cell phone providers for example offer text messaging, photo capability, and internet connectivity to entice consumers to purchase their service over that of the competition. Businesses now offer online bill paying, discounts for internet orders, and auction derived pricing



opportunities. These technological demands are endless and force consumers and suppliers to be conversant with what can be the vogue in technology relating to consumers or stakeholders.

### ***Different collaboration forums***

Collaboration techniques can be applied to different organization successfully. According to Haas (1992) epistemic communities are transnational networks of knowledge-based experts who help decision-makers to define the problems they face and identify various policy solutions and assess the outcomes. The common strategy in most collaborative forums is the sharing of meaning and co-construction of organizational sense (Mupepi, 2009). Networked learning entails the construction of knowledge that is new to the members of the group by tapping their collective practitioner knowledge and the public knowledge base (Lee *et al.*, 2020). It comes in that bundle because there are two conditions necessary in a strategic planning forum. First there must be cooperation among participants. The second condition is that for a group to make sense in organization there is a need to appreciate prevailing cultural conditions. In a knowledge community (KC) strategic management is focused on knowledge creation, and its distribution within cognitive areas where it can be deployed to make the goods highly valued by consumers. In this discourse the assertion that the only complete knowledge is that produced and authenticated by a KC, is made.



**Figure 1: Collaboration in successful enterprise**

**Source:** Adapted from Mupepi (2009)

Numerous technical collaboration forums exist in business organization all over the world. In the discussion a COP, EP, or KC imply the same thing: a successful collaboration forum useful at creating the explicit practices required to make ends meet positively (Mupepi, 2009) (see figure 1). The study draw ontology from Bergerand (1966), Foucault (1972), Mupepi & Sorensen (2013), and Mupepi (2017), among many others. Berger and Luckmann (1966) assert that groups interacting in a social system can create over time, concepts or mental representations of each other's' actions, and that these ideas eventually become adapted into reciprocal roles played by the actors in relation to each other. When these roles are made available to other members of the organization to enter into and play out, the reciprocal interactions are said to be institutionalized. In the process, meaning is embedded in the organization. Knowledge and people's conceptions (and beliefs) of what reality is become embedded in the institutional fabric of the enterprise. Reality is therefore said to be socially constructed. There are many cooperative forums and they include

community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), knowledge community (Earl, 2001), epistemic community (Haas, 1992), and virtual community of practice (Mupepi, 2009), among many others. Abraham (2017) suggested that in a selection of contextual challenges, growing the organization through innovation and transforming a business through a shared culture topped the list.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This paper uses an interpretivist epistemological approach and the ontological position of relativism, which allows the researchers to construct a subjective social reality as they interact with their environment (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). These philosophical assumptions underpinned the use of “exploratory qualitative research design” (Cuthbertson, Robb & Blair, 2020; Martin et al., 2007). A single-case study approach, within which research questions are investigated and used to unearth a contemporary phenomenon in real-life situation (Ghezzi & Cavallo, 2020; Yin & Yuan, 2009). The use of single case study is widely accepted by qualitative researchers who argue that optimal size in case study design is irrelevant (Yin, 2009) as single-cases conducted in great detail could produce equally valid results (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991). The case was selected in accordance with the criteria suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) for selecting case study samples including relevance to the conceptual framework, potential to generate rich information and potential to generate believable explanations and feasibility. The study relied on document reviews as data collection instruments due to differing access to studied organizations and the availability of data. Data were also collected mainly through a review of documents and videos on internet relate to the study. Data collected from the case were analyzed using open and axial coding strategies as part of the thematic analysis technique through a qualitative data analysis process of reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles &

Huberman, 1994; Check & Schutt, 2011).

#### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Garrison and Tanuka (2004) suggested that there were three issues regarding the implementation of blended learning. The first was associated with the disadvantages in technical aspects since blended learning has a strong dependence on the technical resources or tools with which the blended learning experience is delivered. These tools need to be reliable, easy to use, and up to date, for them to have a meaningful impact on the learning experience. The second is about Information Technology literacy which can serve as a significant barrier for students attempting to get access to the course materials, making the availability of high-quality technical support paramount. The third aspect of blended learning is that it can be challenging to group assignments because of difficulties with management in an online setting.

1. *Collaboration in organization:* Knowledge communities and communities of practice suffer from the same pitfalls of all communities. To some, the mission driven orientation can be a detractor to creativity (Twitchchell, 2007). To others, the exchange aspects reek of the over commodification of culture and, by pooling experts or like-minded persons, KCs and COPs can often be less diverse than traditional communities (Garfield, 2020). Perhaps the societal response has been the emergence of social networks. Again, however, it is important to point out social networks and knowledge communities are related, but not the same (Huysman & Wulf, 2006).
2. *Round tables:* Round tables are collaborative forums that evolved from King Arthur's court during the middle ages in England (Perkins, 2003). King Arthur is associated with round boardroom tables and the procedures of meetings, formation of quorums (Dunne, 2005). The king

controlled everything according to how he perceived the situation. The approach is dictatorial and does not give others a turn at the chairmanship. In our world today, national and regional collaborations have become a popular means to manage shared resources and address cross-jurisdictional boundary issues. The question of who participates in the process, who directly affects decisions, and who benefits from those decisions is critical for understanding the broader value created by regional collaborations (Hui *et al.*, 2020).

3. *Communities of practice*: Communities of practice are limited by ownership and control of the organization (McLoughlin *et al.*, 2018). Studies have shown that some owners want to manage their enterprises the way they perceive business and risk (Hubbard, 2020) and may not want to share all the knowledge with individuals or groups (Trkman & Desouza, 2012). In a recent study conducted by Webber and Dunbar (2020), concluded that small communities up to about 40 in size can be managed democratically, but all larger communities require a leadership team structure in place. The frequency of interaction declines as the size of the organization increases, as is the case in personal social networks. This suggests that organizations may be subject to the same kinds of constraint imposed on human social organization by the social brain.
4. *Epistemic communities*: In international relations, epistemic communities have a direct input on how international cooperation may develop in the long term (Baylis, 2020). Transboundary environmental challenges require a ‘unified response’ rather than ‘patchwork policy efforts’, but this is problematic due to enduring differences of state interest and concerns over reciprocity (Piacenza, 2018). The transnational nature of epistemic communities means numerous states may absorb new patterns of logic and behavior, leading to the adoption

of concordant state policies. Therefore, the likelihood of convergent state behavior and associated international coordination is increased (Hsu *et al.*, 2017). An examination of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) for instance unearth the role that epistemic communities play in the policy (Söndergaard, 2020). It follows an interdisciplinary approach for categorizing their role in the ENP and the use of their knowledge by policymakers. Based on the examination of two key areas of the ENP, anti-corruption and rural development, the study challenges one-dimensional assumptions, which claim that expertise and knowledge improve the technical-economic efficiency of EU policies (Kourtelis, 2020).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

There are many ways to creating the competitive advantage and knowledge forums such as epistemic communities of knowledge which are very popular as strategy to advancing organizational goals. Building the organizational capability is one of the proven methods to create the edge in organization. The construction of the capability required can be a social construct in which key stakeholders can provide inputs. A community of practice can therefore be applied in international development assignment to create successful human rights practices. The challenges which face human rights promotion are both theoretical and practical and will require community collaboration if they are to succeed. Theoretically, for the framing of human rights to be relevant to Africa, it has to be situated in a combination of international conceptions of local and international knowledge. However, efforts to formulate international perceptions on democracy are complicated because of the apprehension that they are seen as trying to supersede existing traditions outlook and the lack of clarity about what exactly they mean in situ. Local knowledge provided by a

community of practice provides an avenue in which effective human rights can operate. The conclusion drawn is that human rights organizations are more likely to succeed if they collaborate with the local community in co-constructing a shared human rights vision.

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