

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
AND INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS:
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK u**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this independent paper is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the University of Nairobi for academic credit.

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ABSTRACT

This paper took a Human Resource Development perspective to propose a framework for building inter-organizational networks. Recent work in Human Resource Development has proposed this perspective for adoption by organizations to enhance workforce development. The paper has based its argument on the learning paradigm of HRD to develop a multidisciplinary based and integrated framework for theory building and empirical work.

The paper explored several dimensions of learning to highlight the relevant performance areas through which the networks can be established as facilitated by issues connected with knowledge management. The multidisciplinary model proposed has underscored the role of the defining characteristics of HRD that require the input of concepts from the Resource Based Theory, The Institutional Theory, The Resource Dependence Theory, Organization Theory and Strategic Management Literatures. Seven propositions are made from this framework based on the multidisciplinary literature.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The term Human Resource Development has been studied in the context of human resource management activities in the realms of training and development. The term was first used by Leonard Nadler in 1969 at the Miami Conference of the American Society for Training and development (ASTD). Wilson (2005) observes that HRD represents the latest evolutionary stage in the long tradition of training, educating and developing people for the purpose of contributing towards the achievement of individual, organizational and societal objectives. It has grown to a point of recognition as an area of professional practice and interdisciplinary body of knowledge. It is considered an essential area in the organizations' HRM practice that accounts for the key distinguishing factor in successful organizations (Watson, 2007) as it represents an area of study in Human Resource Management (HRM) that addresses the concerns for growth of employees in order to contribute to the performance of organizations. Torraco (2005) observes that the discipline has expanded from merely providing job skills training to emphasizing executive development, career and technical education and workforce development systems. Bates and Chen (2005) present it as a field of both theory and practice that focuses on the development of human resources and organizational systems, their rational and optimal use, and the establishment of an enabling environment in which these systems are maximally effective in their results.

Within work systems in organizations, HRD serves the basic need of facilitating learning and adaptation to a changing work environment (Toracco, 2005) and is thus concerned with fostering learning which is aimed at enhancing employee learners' efficacy in an organizational setting which ultimately affects organizational performance (Scully-Russ, 2005). The learning takes the form of planned interventions in the individual and organizational processes (Stewart & McGoldrick, 1996). Paprock (2006) points that these interventions are expected to produce learning and performance outcomes at the individual level while at the larger community, national and international contexts will produce economic and humanitarian outcomes.

HRD embraces a multi-disciplinary approach (Nafukho et.al, 2004; Lincoln, 2004; Paprock, 2006) with its theory and practice drawing from several scientific disciplines such as economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, ethics, systems, human resource management, industrial learning, adult learning, management leadership, organizational behavior, organizational development and change (Bates & Chen, 2005; Torraco, 2005). From this multi-disciplinary approach, Bates and Chen (2005) note that HRD roles and functions within work systems are based on three distinct paradigms. The learning paradigm

emphasizes change through learning which is expected to produce development of the individual and therefore postulates learning as a critical part of an organizational culture. The performance paradigm postulates HRD as focused on advancing the performance of systems that sponsor HRD by improving the capabilities of individuals working in the system and improving the system. The meaning of work paradigm takes a holistic approach to human development and the development of organizations and focuses on the development of the whole person so as to realize their full potential meaningfully and enhancing Organizational health through programs that have a human appeal (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001) and transcend organizational boundaries to improve Quality of life in the organization, the society and the world as a whole.

HRD scholarship has embraced "a levels of analysis" approach (Beardwell and Holden, 1997; Stead & Lee, 1996; Garavan et.al, 2004; Van Der Sluis, 2007, McGuire, et.al, 2007; Storberg-Walker, 2007) that has studied HRD on the basis of three levels, namely the individual level, the organizational level and the national level. At the individual level, HRD focuses on individual based interventions such as training and development, organizational development, executive development, technical education and workforce development so as to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness (McLagan, 1989; Torraco, 2005). At the organizational level, HRD focuses on how to achieve and maintain the survival and success of an organization by fostering a culture of lifelong learning so as to facilitate continuous adaptation (Beardwell & Holden, 1997) by utilizing the concept of learning to increase the knowledge and skills of employees so as to enlarge their individual capacities to cope with and change their environment. According to Torraco (2005), HRD experts function at this level to facilitate strategic change. Prasad (1996) identifies HRD at this level as a prerequisite for the growth of organizations by providing the platform for organizational development through learning. On the national level, HRD focuses on a country's national development through the aspect of competitiveness (Paprock, 2006) and the well being of the society (Rao, 1995). According to McLean (2006), HRD contributes to this as it is applied to implement national policies in the creation of a nation's Human Capital.

HRD as a relatively new concept in the field of human resource management offers wide ranging value to stakeholders at the various levels of organizational analysis (Stewart & McGoldrick, 1996; Bates and Chen, 2004; Joy-Matthews et.al, 2004). Its multi-disciplinary nature as well as the unique defining features sufficiently position it for this role as the discipline is strategic in nature, embraces change and is best practiced in an organizational environment that creates a supportive organization culture, management commitment and transformational leadership (Stewart & McGoldrick, 1996; Jackson & Matthias, 1994; Paprock, 2006; Lincoln, 2004; Nafukho et.al, 2004). Garavan (2007) uses the human

capital development and resource based theories to indicate that HRD is best achieved through a strategic approach. This strategic approach has been relied upon to transform work systems through appropriate interventions at multiple levels of the organizational analysis in order to build competitive capabilities for organizations.

The strategic approach to HRD embraces a stakeholder perspective to employee development in which several aspects are identified for both individual and organizational development. The stakeholder approach has received support from a broad spectrum of literature (Watson, 2007; Jones, 2004; Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Hicks & Gullet 1975). The driving factor for this stakeholder approach appears to be the aspect of learning grounded in the learning paradigm of HRD. Thus this learning paradigm has received more attention and application relative to the performance and meaning of work paradigms. A review of the HRD literature supports this observation about the learning paradigm as in the process of organizational functioning, this paradigm is at the epicenter of organizational life as well as facilitating these other two paradigms to deliver their core offerings. Evidence for this is found in several disintegrated pieces of work from the HRM and the HRD literatures. Proponents of the balanced score card approach have relied on this learning perspective to propose a performance management system based on consideration of stakeholders for the purpose of continuous improvement (Jackson & Schuler, 2000). The already espoused HRD Philosophy has put learning at the center of HRD. For example, Wheelock and Callahan (2006) identify the major points of the HRD philosophy to lie along individual employee learning that leads to development. Gillay et.al (2002)'s approach as well connects learning with development. Sambrook (2008) notes that HRD is about people, learning and organizations. Van Der Sluis' (2007) approach to HRD considers the development of human resources and the increase of human capital of organizations, a perspective that depicts HRD as a development process for employees related to better performance and personal growth at the individual level. The scope of activities necessary to support this learning will extend beyond the boundaries of an organization.

Weigl et.al (2008) have proposed an HRD based approach to the establishment of interorganizational networks. Scholarship on this area is in its initial stages and thus continued work is invited to suggest how HRD may be useful in enhancing interorganizational networks. The learning paradigm to HRD seems relevant in this case when combined with the stakeholder approach to both HRD and HRM that borrows from the multidisciplinary nature of HRD. The stakeholder approach to both SHRM and SHRD Literature is part of the broad stakeholder approach to strategic management (Freeman & McVea, 2001; Pearce & Robinson, 1997). A distinguishing mark of this stakeholder approach to strategic management is the provision of a framework to organizational strategies, consideration of the external environment, value

building management, relationship management, organizational survival and integration. The approach has been build on the pillars of corporate planning, systems theory, corporate social responsibility and organizational theory, and thus an indication that several supporting areas to these building blocks are suitable to extending this work on stakeholder management.

The organization theory and systems approach are particularly useful in their focus on the environment, networking and learning that supports continuous adaptation to environmental change. Seperately.both the HRD and organization theory literatures have focused on learning that has pointed to associated areas of the different types of learning, creativity, innovation, knowledge management and technology transfer and the conditions under which they may enhance establishment of interfirm networks (Pfeffer & Salancik,1978). However, these have not been integrated within the HRD literature in spite of the fact that learning and HRM have been postulated to form strong bases for interorganizational networks from some sections of strategic management scholarship (Mintzberg et.al, 2003).The focus of this paper is three fold. First, to consolidate the existing work on learning with a view to highlighting the various types of learning and their connection with HRD.Secondly,to identify those areas emerging from the learning paradigm that form the basis for an HRD based interorganizational networking.Thirdly,to propose an integrative framework and suitable propositions for future research in HRD based Interorganizational networks.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

This paper uses a multidisciplinary perspective to critically examine the HRD literature with a focus on the learning paradigm to identify the various types of learning, the emerging areas from this paradigm suitable for inter-organizational networks and establish a theoretical framework for research. The paper uses a wide range of literature from Human Resource Management, Human Resource Development, Organizational studies, and strategic management as obtained from relevant publications in text books, hard copy and online journal articles.

The paper first attempts to review the existing literature on HRD out of which it identifies the emerging aspects of learning. Several dimensions of learning are explained in order to show connection between learning and the stakeholder approach to HRD and HRM.This approach requires a strategic perspective, which is discussed under the strategic human resource development literature. This is then followed by the stakeholder literature first from HRD and then from the strategic management literature. A discussion on the emerging areas that should be considered in the interfirm linkages based on HRD then follows. The proposed framework is then presented and discussions on several aspects of the framework provided together with some propositions.

SECTION 2

OVERVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 THE MEANING OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Several approaches have been used to explain the meaning of HRD. The definitions so far advanced tend to reflect the core beliefs of the leading HRD scholars (Bates & Chen, 2004). However, there is a general consensus among HRD scholars that the most comprehensive definition of HRD is that advanced by McLean and McLean (2001). This definition states that "HRD is any process or activity that either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adult's work based knowledge, expertise, productivity and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation or ultimately the whole humanity". Other perspectives also exist from several other scholars. A few of these perspectives are provided by:-

Watkins (1989), HRD is the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long-term work related learning capacity at the individual, group and organizational levels of organizations.

Chaffosky (1992), HRD is the study and practice of increasing the learning capacity of individuals, groups, collectives and organizations through the development and application of learning -based interventions for the purpose of optimizing human and organizational growth and effectiveness.

Joy-Matthews et.al (2004), HRD is the term we use to describe an integrated and holistic, conscious and proactive approach to changing work related knowledge and behavior using a range of learning strategies and techniques. The strategies and techniques referred to generally are intended to help individuals, groups and organizations realize their full potential for working in a way that allows for individuality and yet enhances effectiveness within particular contexts.

Armstrong (2006), HRD is concerned with the provision of learning, development and training opportunities in order to improve individual, team and organizational performance. HRD is essentially a business led approach to developing people with a strategic framework.

The definitions present HRD as a discipline that has embraced a great deal of the propositions of the behavioral science literature in impacting organizational systems to achieve organizational development based on the area of learning. The behavioral sciences have adopted a multilevel perspective in the study of organizations out of which HRD borrows concepts to address HRM concerns for attaining a

resource based competitive advantage. HRD adopts a strategic orientation in developing an organization's human capital through the use of appropriate interventions (Luthans, 1992; Robbins, 2005; Robbins & Judge, 2007).

2.2 THE PHILOSOPHY OF HRD

Joy-Matthews et.al (2004) note that HRD as a relatively new area of management practice and inquiry, is set against a background of turbulence and change in organizational life. These changes are in business environments, work processes and organizational cultures, which drive a need for successful change management strategies. HRM has been associated with change management initiatives in organizations. Some scholars are of the view that change programs in organizations largely depend on an organization's human resources (Prasad, 1996; Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Weigl et.al, 2008). Prasad (1996) has indeed postulated Organizational Development and change as part of an organization's Human Resource Management system. HRM is thus currently practiced as a strategic partner in many organizations for facilitating change (Dessler, 2003; Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Joy-Matthews et.al 2004). This change would require organizational preparedness and readiness among organizational members and thus puts HRD practices squarely as a facilitating factor to this process through the aspect of learning. Some scholars have also reported some experiences by organizations implementing change that point to a strong case for healthy HRD practice in organizations when implementing change. For example: Gilley, Dixon and Gilley (2008) report that the rate of failure in delivering sustainable change reaches 80%-90% a times, a case which is so because of an organization's inability to remain flexible and adaptive to a business environment due to failure to incorporate some highly valued HRD concerns such as leadership. Thus the HRD perspective employed in any given setting needs to position the organization's HRM to function as a change agent. An appropriate HRD philosophy therefore needs to contribute to the strategic human resource management goals of an organization as part of the broad HRM philosophy.

Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2005) indicate that the HRM philosophy is based on a series of activities which first enables working people and the organizations which use their skills to agree about the objectives and nature of their working relationships and ensure that the agreement is fulfilled. Schuler and Jackson (1987) developed a model for linking competitive strategies with HRM practices that focus on developing appropriate employee role behaviors and HRM policies to each strategy being implemented. Dessler (2003) notes that HRM plays a strategic role in positioning the firm's workforce as strategic partners and change agents. In this partnership setting, human resources play the role of formulating, implementing strategy, creating and adding value. A supportive HRM philosophy will therefore be necessary during times of organizational change for the purpose of sustaining the change. Some scholars

bring out several aspects that must constitute that philosophy: focus on human resources as the most important contributor to the organization's resource based competitive advantage, a distinct approach to people management based on strategic HRM, immobility of human resources, employee development, linkage of HRM with business strategy, the need for collaboration between line and staff managers, team building , a partnership perspective to the management of human resources, clear vision and core values, culture of mutuality, openness and trust, direct relationship between human resource practices and customer satisfaction, improvement of business performance through organization cultures that foster innovation and flexibility (Prasad,1996;Jackson &Schuler,2000; Tomkinson,2005; Wilson,2005; Balderson,2005; Torrington, Hall & Taylor,2005; Ardichvili & Dirani.2005)

Wheelock and Callahan (2006) provide the picture of a relevant HRD philosophy espoused by many HRD Scholars and practitioners with the key underlying assumptions and beliefs held by the scholars and practitioners as well as the common ground among the various paradigms of HRD.They identify five aspects of this philosophy as: a strong belief in learning and development as avenues to individual growth; a belief that organizations can be improved through learning and development activities; a commitment to people and human potential; a deep desire to see people grow as individuals; and a passion for learning.Gillay et.al (2000) add their claim that indicates that "HRD is about the development of people within organizations, and that this development generally takes place through learning activities. So these three areas of people, learning and organizations are seen repeatedly through the HRD literature."

An outstanding feature of this philosophy is the aspect of the establishment and utilization of human expertise.HRD recognizes the value of human expertise and holds the view that the unleashing of human expertise is ultimately for the purpose of improving performance at the individual, group, and organizational levels and that an HRD professional would mold that expertise in the direction of the organization's strategic intent.Individual and organizational learning thus play a significant role through interventions that are strategic, organizational, long term, cultural, organic and embrace change. The extent to which the interventions bring about organizational change facilitated through changed behavior has been described as a defining feature of HRD. Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) look at this intervention as a specific methodology or technique used to effect change in a target organization or section of the organization to improve organizational effectiveness. Huse (1980) indicates that this intervention occurs if an organization responds to a felt need for change and leads to a normative change in the organization culture.

2.3 HRD PARADIGMS

Three paradigms have been suggested in the study of HRD (Bates&Chen, 2004, 2005), namely the learning, the performance and the meaning of work paradigms.

The learning paradigm emphasizes change through learning that should contribute to individual development and considers learning as a critical part of organizational culture. It uses the levels of analysis approach to consider HRD as a field of study and practice responsible for fostering long-term, work related learning capacity at the individual, group and organizational levels in organizations. The paradigm has two dimensions. The first argues that the real value of learning lies in its ability to contribute to individual development. Individual development in turn is framed to include not simply the accumulation of knowledge or skills but the development of cognitive schemes and ways of thinking that can enlighten and transform personal experience. The second dimension recognizes the need to move to a broader, more transformative definition of workplace learning that allows learning to be a critical part of organizational culture. It is linked to interest in learning organization strategies. i.e strategies for developing learning systems in organizations that facilitate an organization's ability to continuously expand the capacity to create a future and change in response to new realities. HRD's role is thus to weave a continuous and enhanced capacity to learn, adapt, and change into individual experience and organizational culture. An appropriate understanding of this learning relied upon in HRD borrows from Ribeaux and Poppleton (1978). They describe learning as a process within the organism, which results in the capacity for changed performance which can be related to experience rather than maturation. From this definition, they identify several features of learning suitable to HRD practice in organizations that depict learning as a cognitive process involving assimilation of information; affective involving emotions and attitudes; involves physical process of muscles and nerves; leads to change whether positive or negative for the learner and; involves an experience after which an individual is qualitatively changed the way he/she conceived something.

The performance paradigm advances its arguments through the role that HRD should play in work systems where it is being applied. It posits that the purpose of HRD is to advance the mission of the performance system that sponsors the HRD efforts by improving the capabilities of individuals working in the system and improving the system in which they perform their work. Advocates of this paradigm focus on HRD's efforts on achieving the core performance outcomes that organizations wish to achieve by facilitating individual and system performance improvement. Proponents of this paradigm point that HRD goals and activities have value only to the extent that they contribute directly to the mission and goals of the sponsoring organization.

Learning of work Paradigm is developmental in nature. It takes a holistic approach to human performance and the development of an organization and is reflected in two dimensions. The first dimension focuses on the development of the whole person so that they can realize their full potential. The second dimension is of the view that work transcends individual and organizational boundaries. HRD then should have responsibility beyond issues of work objectives, task structure, quality and performance to exercise concern for the health and humanness of organizations, society and the world as a whole.

An evaluation of these paradigms against the work of some scholars within the relevant HRD literature displays some outstanding aspects (Argyris, 1982; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001; Senge, et al 1996; Poell, 2005; Robbins & Judge, 2007; Senge, 1990; Wilson & Cattel, 2005). The main focus of the paradigms display an interwoven nature of the paradigms. There are linkages among the paradigms themselves. The learning orientation brings out strong indications of the role of learning, knowledge creation through creativity and innovation and that of supportive learning organizational systems. The performance paradigm will rely on the learning paradigm to deliver organizational results and that learning can only be judged to have taken place if and when there is a learning behavior. It is this behavior that affects tangible organizational performance results. The meaning of a paradigm does not define what this development would be and whether it would be a direct result of the learning processes. It also implies performance of some HRM activities traditionally considered to be of high quality of work life programs. In spite of their strong insights into the role of HRD in organizational learning, the paradigms however fail to demonstrate the linkages between learning, development and knowledge generation and management. Thus HRD scholars are called upon to establish the appropriate interventions for understanding these implied linkages.

LEVELS OF HRD ANALYSIS

Based on the described characteristic nature and philosophy of HRD, the discipline uses a "levels of analysis" approach (Stead & Lee, 1996; Garavan et al, 2004) as Individual level analysis, Organization level analysis and National level analysis. Appropriate Interventions are applied across each of these levels to bring about change in organizations,

Individual level

Emphasizes the human aspect of HRD that addresses the performance of an organization. It covers several themes: self efficacy, self esteem, motivation to learn, motivation through expectation, social development, the needs and expectations of learning. HRD interventions at this level include training, work, Career development plans and Learning to cope with technological change.

b) The organizational level

This level emphasizes the resource aspect of HRD. It is at this level the organization provides the context and drives for human and system performance. It addresses the following set of themes: resource maximization, productivity enhancement, achievement of employee full potential, achievement of organizational goals, alignment with organization strategy, knowledge management and intellectual capital, employability, entrepreneurial behaviors and team working. HRD interventions at this level include Development of long term strategies, Collaboration with external stakeholders and Strategies to maintain market share.

c) The national level

It is also called as the societal level of HRD. It focuses on the development of communities, societies, national competitiveness and facilitation of networking. This level concentrates on the provision of education and the development of human capital toward improving national competitiveness and the quality of life of citizens. It has three streams: National cultural influences and HRD, HRD and human social capital enhancement in the economy and Notion of learning communities. The main themes of this level revolve around Nature of the economy, Government and legislative influences, Educational systems influences and the role played by professional organizations. HRD interventions at this level touch on continuing learning opportunities, collaboration between private firms with public bodies on consultation projects at national and international levels and Educational measures to skill up the workforce.

Across these levels, some themes seem to strongly emerge that are suitable to theory building in HRD and for the purpose of this paper. Such themes are on HRM practices in employee development, concept of development, the stakeholder approach to management, knowledge management and contextual factors shaping HRD. Evidence for this exists in the work of Joy-Matthews et.al (2004) and Armstrong (2006) that highlights the major leading ideas that shape the nature of HRD and the main approaches for accomplishing HRD in organizations. They suggest the following list of programs under the umbrella of HRD leading ideas and approaches for accomplishing HRD as talent management and leadership development, linking development to organization strategy, coaching and mentoring, HRD as a business partner, knowledge management, visionary and transformational leadership, continuous professional development, performance management, organizational development, learning, TQM, project management and training.

2.5 THE EMERGING ISSUES

HRD as a strategic area in organizations should address the critical success factors of business in terms of product development, innovation, quality and cost leadership; the real links between learning, development and training activities and business performance; and the design to benefit all stakeholders in the business. This has implications for the utilization of HRD in organizations to create and sustain competitive advantage for each organization. However, several issues require attention in order to demonstrate the real links between HRD practice and an organization's path to create and sustain distinctive competences based on human resources. In this context, learning having been considered to be at the center and as a defining feature of HRD, how does it contribute to this process for creating and sustaining competitive advantages for firms in the context of their dynamic environments?

The levels of analysis perspective and the HRD paradigms point at the need for HRM based interventions within organizations that would also require collaboration with external parties. Thus it is necessary to identify the types of programs in which HRD would enhance inter-firm alliances. An important concern is how the stakeholder approach embraced in both strategic management and HRM would be applied in enhancing inter-firm linkages. From these broad literatures, it is imperative to develop answers to the following concerns (Wilson & Cattell, 2005; Balderson, 2005; Shipton, 2005):

- Under what conditions is the learning orientation utilized to enhance interfirm linkages for strategic purposes?
- How is knowledge creation related to processes of technology development (invention, innovation, diffusion)?
- How does the strategic orientation connect with the process of knowledge creation, sharing, management and transfer?

The multidisciplinary approach to HRD provides a way out of the dilemma. The resource based view of the firm identifies approaches for creating competitive advantages based on human resources. The behavioral sciences have studied learning and its outcomes (Beardwell & Holden, 1997). The SHRD, SHRM and strategic management literatures have studied the design of programs in organizations that attempt to establish conditions of viable fit through which HRD would contribute to interfirm linkages (Clark & Beardwell, 2007). The institutional theory and resource dependence theory also bring out an understanding of environmental dynamics that constrain organizations chances of survival and access to economic resources as well as strategic responses required under different environmental conditions (Jaffee, 2001; Jones, 2004). The following section utilizes these diverse areas to respond to the concerns highlighted here.

SECTION 3

HRD AND THE LEARNING ORIENTATION

3.1 LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Learning has for long been acknowledged as a major determinant of organizational success. From the behavioral sciences, learning has been studied at the individual level and connected with change in behavior. Organization theorists have studied the concept from an organizational perspective. In both perspectives, the aspect of change is a notable ingredient in the learning process. Scholars in HRD borrow from this change perspective to advance a case for the adoption of a learning orientation in order to respond to environmental dynamics. Morgan (1988) considered it as a key aspect of HRM function guiding processes such as recruitment. Kanter (1992) linked it with the survival of the organization in the context of organizational turbulence by ensuring that organizational members are employable.

HRD scholars have cited learning as a source of competitive advantage in the context of change. Learning in an environment of change positions people as a source of distinctive competence and makes them become the only source of differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage (Kontoghicrghes et.al, 2005; Storberg-Walker & Gubbins,2007; Collin, 2007).The resource based view to competitive advantage based on human resources identifies the critical conditions that bring about this distinctiveness as employees who add value, are rare and cannot be copied (Jackson &Schuler,2000;Golding,2007). Perez et.al (2005) indicate that organizational learning constitutes a source of competitive advantage, and identify particular HR activities that promote learning such as recruitment and selection activities, training programs and design of compensation systems that reward knowledge acquisition and learning.

Learning has also been associated with organizational development. Watson (2007) links the development of the individual to the development of the company as a whole and notes that "there is no development without learning". He emphasizes the importance of organizational profitability, responsiveness, adaptability and conscious approach to change and underlines the importance of breaking down outmoded ideas, attitudes and practices before building new skills, structures and values. According to Wilson (2005) development programs usually include elements of planned study and experience and are frequently supported by a coaching or counseling facility. Bolton (1995) indicates that development occurs when a gain in experience is effectively combined with the conceptual understanding that can illuminate it giving increased confidence both to act and to perceive how such action results to its context. Thus, it is clear that development indicates movement to an improved situation that for the individual means advancing towards the physical and mental potential. Reese and Overton (1970) viewed development as

the process of becoming increasingly complex, more elaborate and differentiated, by virtue of learning and maturation. In an organism, greater complexity, differentiation among the parts leads to changes in the structure of the whole and to the way in which the whole functions. Their view has a very strong insight into the link between learning and organization development. They point that in the individual this greater complexity opens up the potential for new ways of acting and responding to the environment, leads to opportunity for even further learning and contributes to development.

Scholars cite several aspects of learning that are relevant to the development and growth of HRD .Van Der Sluis (2007) connects HRD with an organization's human capital development .better performance, personal growth at individual and organizational levels in the context of change facilitated through new skills acquisition .knowledge of world views and behaviors as employees are exposed to learning situations through interactions on the level of the individual, projects or teams or on the organizational level and even on the broader level of stakeholders like clients,suppliers,trade unions and stakeholders.

This learning that is development oriented is considered part of HRD and so HRD scholars propose adaptive, generative and transformative learning (London & Sessa, 2007; Stead & Lee, 1996).Adaptive learning happens when a group fine tunes existing behavior patterns through trial and error. Adaptability enhances long-term performance in light of rapidly changing external conditions. Generative learning arises when groups seek and discover information proactively, acquire new knowledge and skills and then apply the information, knowledge and skills. The group gathers information, seeks alternatives, reflects on the work processes, tests assumptions, obtains different opinions and adopts new routines. Transformative learning recreates the group, altering its purpose, goals and/or structure. Transformational learning occurs when people within groups critically examine core values, assumptions and or beliefs based on that critical analysis. It transforms the way group members perceive their roles, responsibilities and relationships. Organizations are therefore called upon to invest in continuous learning which is needed by both individuals and organizations. At the individual level it is required to perform jobs well and to increase the chances of advancement and professional development under changing conditions, while at the organizational level is needed to master uncertain and unambiguous environments and to sustain competitive advantage. Both individuals and organizations have an active role to play in this context of continuous learning. The organizations undertake to invest in learning while employees take control of their own learning.HRD in view of this advises organizations to facilitate the learning of organizational members within a learning culture and develop a learning organization as well as extend to create a learning society in which there is a life long learning in order to provide the skills required for competitiveness in a global economy.

3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

The organizational learning literature considers organizations as continuous learning systems. Marsick (1994) viewed the concept as a process of coordinated systems of change, with mechanisms built in for individuals and groups to access, build and use organizational memory, structure, and culture to develop long-term organizational capacity. Hodge et.al (1996) consider it as an attempt to create an organization that is able to monitor continually the environment and adapt to changing conditions. Garavan and McCarthy's (2008) approach has conceptualized learning as an iterative process that involves action, reflection, change and the creation of new knowledge and views organizational learning as the process of enhancing actions of organizations through better knowledge and understanding. Slotte, Tynjala and Hytonen (2004)'s view indicates that learning at the organizational level embraces the activities of an organization that is continuously expanding its capacity to create its future. This capacity is grounded on the ability of employees and organizations (as a collective of individuals) to change and become more effective and on the fact that change requires not only open communication and the empowerment of members of the work community but also a culture of collaboration.

Beardwell and Holden (1997) indicated that organizational learning develops a firm's resource based capability in which context it is guided by two principles: The need for powerful and coherent vision of the organization to be communicated and maintained across the workforce in order to promote awareness of the need for strategic thinking at all levels; and the need to develop strategy in the context of a vision that is not only powerful but also open ended and unambiguous.

From these perspectives, it appears that the organizational learning literature has included both organizational and individual level explanations. Organizational level explanations focus on routines and the role of culture, whereas individual level explanations focus on the cognitions and behaviors of individuals. A key assumption is that learning gaps among individuals hinder the effectiveness of learning at the organizational level. Thus Slotte et.al (2004) recognized three stages of organizational learning, namely the Cognitive stage, the Internalization stage (performance stage) and the Improvement in performance stage (which brings about change in better results, superior quality, increased market share and other tangible gains). These stages have been used to link learning with knowledge management in organizations.

3.3 COLLECTIVE LEARNING

Organizational survival arising from adaptive, generative and transformational learning requires collective learning. Storberg-Walker and Gubbins (2007) note that Organizational survival is dependent on collective learning which occurs first at the individual level, but it is argued that knowledge of the group is greater than the sum of the individual members' knowledge. Collective learning processes are more adaptive, generative and transformative depending on the characteristics of the external environment and the internal readiness for change.

Garavan and McCarthy (2008) note that Collective learning processes have emerged at a theoretical level out of recognition that the sum of individual learning does not equate with the collective level of analyses. Collectives are viewed as open, learning systems that continually interact with their environments. These systems exist to do work but as they work they learn. Practitioners are expected to use more novel interventions and to enable organizations cope in many learning situations.

Collective learning has implications for interfirm networks. Garavan and McCarthy (2008) view collective learning as something that can take place between organizations or collectivities. It is characterized by a variety of interests and entails networking and working together with organizations both internally and externally to apply individual and collective knowledge and use this knowledge to achieve some form of competitive advantage. It enables organizations to build boundary spanning skills and interdependencies and facilitate shared knowledge, product capability and profitability. Thus collective learning practice involves a broad range of stakeholders including dyads, teams, communities, networks, organizations and whole societies. It also points at Collaborative learning. Collaborative learning focuses on learning between collectivities and its potential for competitive advantage. It is defined as the intervention of two or more people engaged in value creation activities based on improving, practicing and transferring learning skills both within the groups and to the organization or groups of organizations to which the groups belong. Collective learning advances the notion of societal learning, defined as learning from a network of organizations, customers, suppliers, and others who are trying to improve their practices.

3.4 THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Most of the literature has not distinguished organizational learning and the learning organization. This distinction is however considered key to understanding how learning in the context of organizations leads to innovation and knowledge creation in organizations. Some attempts have however been made. Kontoghiorghes et.al (2005) note that Learning organizations are designed to increase competitiveness through generative learning that is forward looking and reduces the major shocks of change through close relationships with customers and other key constituents that allow for mutual adjustment and through the ability to quickly configure and reallocate resources based on environmental

changes. Organizational learning on the other hand is viewed as a process or set of activities where as the learning organization is viewed as a form or organization. Learning takes place naturally in organizations where as it takes efforts to develop a learning organization. Literature on organizational learning emerged from academic inquiry while that of the learning organization developed from practice. Two more factors used for distinction are:

- Who learns-in organizational learning the focus is on individual learners at the individual, group and organizational levels.
- Location of knowledge-in organizational learning knowledge resides in individuals and in the organizational memory. A learning organization defined as one where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

Garavan and McCarthy (2008) note that the learning organization starts from the premise of a positive relationship between organizational learning and performance defined in terms of profitability, productivity and innovation. Models of the learning organization emphasize the need to implement systems, processes, policies and mechanisms designed to promote learning. Organizations that are more facilitating of learning will be better able to respond to the challenges of the external environment.

Garavan and McCarthy's (2008) approach traces the origin of the term learning organization to the strategic aspects of learning and distinguish two interpretations to the concept of strategic organizational learning. The first is the Strategic aspect that deals with organizational learning as a retrospective sense making and social learning process. The other is the proactive, intentional, targeted process emphasizing retrieval of real time, specific knowledge from ongoing strategic initiatives. The strategic organizational learning may be considered part of organizational learning but with some distinctive nature: fosters continuous radical innovation, intra-organizational, ecological processes, integrating various levels of learning in organizations and including processes of both strategic knowledge creation and strategic knowledge distillation. Organizations that are more facilitating of learning are better able to respond the challenges of the external environment and their characteristics are: open communication, communication and dialogue, team working, empowerment, participation in decision making, visionary, idealized notions of organizations. Learning organizations exist because of the existence of shared learning and collective mental models. Herarty and Morley (2008) consider the learning organization as one based on the system of shared values and beliefs that shape how organizational members think, feel and behave. A central theme of the learning organization literature is that learning is intentional and that the organization, through

its structures, culture and systems is designed to learn, an expression that compares favorably with those of early writers on the concept of the learning organization. Senge (1990) described it as an organization that is continuously expanding to create its future. Wick and Lean (1995) defined it as one that continually improves by rapidly creating and refining the capabilities required for future success. Pedler et.al (1989) viewed it as an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself. Hence Learning organizations have to be able to adapt to their context and develop their people to match the context. Garvin (1993) considered it as an organization that is skilled at meeting, acquiring, and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights. Accordingly they do five things as: Systematic problem solving, Experimentation, Learning from past experience, Learning from others through benchmarking and Transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization by seconding people with new expertise or by educating and training programs, as long as the latter are linked explicitly with implementation.

3.5 COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING AND PRACTICE

Jorgensen and Keller (2008) present Communities of practice as a social learning theory that contains four basic components: practice; meaning; community; identity. Communities of practice is defined by Lave and Wenger(1991) as an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their community. The most widely recognized benefit of communities of practice is their ability to allow for the generalization and dissemination of tacit knowledge that is hard to communicate because it is mostly intuitive and embedded in a specific context.

Garavan and McCarthy (2008) define communities of practice as collective practice which focuses on the relationship between the activities of individuals and the context of such activities. Key features of collective practice are the participation of members in communal activities, the social construction of meaning and understanding, and the mutual engagement, negotiation and development of a shared perspective or meaning. Communities of practice emphasize a social constructivist perspective and learning as an individual activity is considered misguided and of little value to understanding learning in collectivities. Communities of practice primarily emphasize the tacit learning of collectivities and are understood as a joint enterprise that is continually negotiated and produces a shared repertoire of knowledge and resources that members develop over time. The collective practice focuses on the relationship between the activities of individuals and the context of such activities. Collective practices are relations among the person, activity and situation. Key features of collective practice include the participation of members in collective activities, the social construction of meaning and understanding and the mutual engagement, negotiation and development of shared perspective or meaning.

3.6 LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Learning in organizations is associated with knowledge creation and management. Slotte et al.'s (2004) approach to stages of organizational learning directly points at the link between learning and knowledge. The last stage of improvement is closely connected with the ability to manage knowledge. Organizations can manage their knowledge by extending individual learning to include issues such as the technology used to maintain and transfer explicit knowledge, the availability of access to knowledge and the ability to gather and construct new information (Garavan & McCarthy, 2008). The knowledge creation perspective has been highlighted as the most distinctive and imitable resource available to firms, which enables them to effectively employ, manipulate and transform various organizational resources. The degree to which knowledge is acquired and used in organizations is primarily as a result of a conflux of interdependent influences of organizational processes including structural, environmental and social dimensions, with an increasing focus on understanding the organization as a social community specializing in knowledge exchange. Kontoghiorghes et al. (2005) highlight some aspects of the learning organization that portray it as one that is skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights. Van Der Sluis (2007) brings out the aspect of innovation that contributes to knowledge generation considered a key factor for competition. Poell (2005) indicated that innovation related learning requires the development of systems to capture and share individual learning before organizations can learn which is part of the system of knowledge creation companies. Jackson and Schuler (2000) in their list of steps to developing organizational readiness for change underscore the role of building the architecture to support a change initiative which is accomplished through developing a means for recording lessons learned from change efforts and ensuring that these lessons are used to guide future change efforts. This will involve four types of knowledge conversion among people which can be combined to form processes in time and include:

- Socialization of tacit knowledge by which people learn from each other by sharing experiences, imitation, trial and error.
- Externalization of tacit knowledge to make it explicit by which people learn by systematizing and codifying their implicit knowledge and making visible what is hidden inside them.
- Combination in which explicit knowledge is reproduced as explicit knowledge, whereby people learn by using materials and other resources specifically aimed at teaching people.
- Internalization to make explicit knowledge tacit, under which people learn by practicing skills, automatising procedures, acquainting themselves with tasks by doing them.

Heraty and Moriey (2008)'s approach present the organization knowledge as the conflux of three essential elements:

- Skills (technical,professional,and social expertise of organizational members-the know-how or explicit knowledge of the organization)
- Cognitions (information,ideas,attitudes,norms,and values shared by organization members including the know why or tacit knowledge of the organization)
- System (structures, procedures and policies related to performing tasks, coordinating resources and managing external resources).

3.7 FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING

Several factors affect organizational learning namely, leadership and innovation, the systems view, a strategic HRD approach and a stakeholder approach to HRD.

Leadership and innovation

Learning that leads to innovation involves change which takes the nature of continuous and transformational change (Gilley, Dixon & Gilley ,2008).Change and innovation has been associated with some dimensions of organizational success such as market share leadership. This kind of change is anchored by the leadership system in the organization. Organizations are required to address a host of questions with regard to this requirement for leadership:

- What is the level of leadership effectiveness in implementing change and subsequently driving innovation within organizations?
- Which specific leadership skills are perceived as necessary to execute change initiatives and drive innovation?

Leadership is required in this context because of the type of learning required to support innovation.HRD scholars suggest double loop learning that is considered transformational, as opposed to single loop learning. Double loop learning involves change efforts that reject current paradigms or question fundamental assumptions while single loop learning is regarded as change that is incremental working within a current organizational paradigm. Innovation necessitates disruptive change, i.e changing to the extent of clearly differentiating itself in the market. Successful execution of transformational change has been identified as a factor leading to innovation and subsequently to increased competitiveness. Leadership has been cited as a major determinant of the ability of the organization to change by reducing resistance to change and influencing employee behavior that promotes the emergence of novel ideas through creativity. Some scholars have demonstrated very clear links between leadership skills and abilities and effectiveness at implementing change and driving innovation. Six skills have been found to positively influence the organizational success rate and have therefore been incorporated as target elements into

numerous change models: ability to coach, ability to reward, ability to communicate, ability to motivate, ability to involve and support others and ability to provide teamwork and collaboration.

A systems view

Innovation has a direct linkage with creativity (Watson, 2007). Creativity is increasingly understood as a social phenomenon especially in organizational contexts. Creativity as a social as well as an individual and intrapsychic phenomenon requires a systems approach to allow for feedback cycles among persons and situations. It is also regarded as an issue of attribution (Amabile, 1995). This thus identifies groups and organizations as sites of engagement in creativity. Watson (2007) considers the learning organization as a systematic approach of seeing everything as interconnected rather than simple cause and effect.

Systems theory has complex roots. A strand of this theory that is relevant to stakeholder theory was pioneered by Ackoff and Churchman (Freeman & McVea, 2001). Their ideas were applied to organizational systems in the early 1970's (Ackoff 1970, 1974) and still continue to be applied in organizations (Huse, 1980; Hodge et al, 1996; Jaffee, 2001; Robbins, 1990). Systems theory emphasizes the external links that are part of every organization. Thus, organizations described as 'open systems' are part of a much larger network rather than being independent self-standing entities. Identification of both the stakeholders and the interconnections between them is a critical step in this approach. From a systems perspective, problems can only be solved with the support of all the members, or stakeholders, in the network. Systems theory emphasizes the development of collective strategies that optimize the network. Individual optimization strategies are not the focus of analysis of this type of approach as they would simply result in sub-optimal network solutions.

An SHRD Perspective

The need to adopt an SHRD approach has been occasioned by changes that have seen shifts in focus from Training to learning and from HRD to SHRD (Watson 2007). Balderson (2005) is of the view that a link should exist between the Training and Development that an organization undertakes and its business strategy. Personnel are regarded as human resources meaning that they are to be valued and managed. An alignment between strategy and HRD is therefore needed. SHRM and SHRD should be activities of management rather than of functional specialists and should be aligned to the business strategies of organizations. Joy-Matthews et al (2004) are of the view that in the context of environmental turbulence, there is need for explicit links between business strategy and any management priority including the development of people. Human resources are finite and need to be managed and valued in the context of organizational strategies and policies. Such integration is necessary to develop strategic capability, i.e. achieve alignments of tangible and intangible assets and appropriate resource usage, determine

competitive position and maintain stakeholder commitment. Pfeffer (1994) pointed that there is a correlation between how workers are managed on the one hand and sustained organizational performance on the other.

According to Garavan (2007), HRD is best achieved through a strategic approach, a position that is consistent with the resource based and human capital theories. Thus SHRD contributes to the creation of firm specific knowledge and skill when it is aligned with the strategic goals of the organization. SHRD as a multilevel concept contributes to the organization in enhancing its performance in the long term. Garavan's approach makes reference to the resource based theory of the firm and the human capital theory. The resource based theory postulates that internal knowledge and skill represent important sources of competitive advantage. The human capital theory argues that firms should protect core competences through investment in training and development. Thus the value of employees to the firm is related to their uniqueness and value of the capabilities and skills that are unique, difficult to replicate and imitate by competitors.

Golding (2007) supports this SHRD approach on the basis of the need for increased flexibility or "agility" in organizational structures and relationships in attempts to identify organizational forms that foster creativity but avoid chaos. He noted that tension can arise between innovation and maintaining focus on future products and meeting duplication, between a focus on future products and meeting time to market criteria, between long-term visions and ensuring performance today. Strategic HRM concerns of the nature of business strategy from which SHRD takes its theoretical constructs. Added to this is the aspect of transformation in organizational forms, which have impacted simultaneously on both structures and relationships in organizations.

The SHRD orientation offers some benefits to organizations. Swanson (1995) noted that Strategic HRD enables the organization to respond to challenges and opportunities through the identification and delivery of HRD interventions. Secondly, it enables individuals, supervisors, line managers and top managers to be informed of their roles and participate in HRD delivery. Thirdly, it enables Management to have operational guidelines which explain the reason for investment in HRD. Thus it facilitates for the development of a policy statement to explicitly describe the relationship between the objectives of the organization and the HRD function. On this basis, the SHRD literatures suggest that any conceptualization of HRD must focus on evaluating the linkages among organizational strategies, HRD systems and policies and practices incorporate the perspectives of multiple stakeholders and focus on the contributions at multiple levels of analysis.

A Stakeholder approach

The need for the adoption of the stakeholder approach in HRD has been connected with the same changes that have occasioned the adoption of SHRD, notably shifts from training to learning and from HRD to SHRD (Watson, 2007). The shifts have brought about an increased role of stakeholders in the process. The stakeholders are characterized by their varying degrees of power and influence, roles, different values, use of different tactics to achieve their aims, engagement in different learning experiences, different aims, objectives and structures in different contexts and cultures with different expectations. Dowling (2001) identified four types of stakeholders as:

- Normative groups: concerned about organizational performance and include directors, regulators, trade associations, investors.
- Functional groups: those involved in day to day operations and include managers, employees, suppliers and distributors.
- Diffuse groups: those that have special interests in the organization and include advocacy groups and journalists.
- Customers

A wide cross section of both the HRM and HRD Literatures point at a growing concern for the stakeholder approach in theory and practice (Hall & Goodale, 1986; Armstrong, 2006; Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Clark & Beardwell, 2007; Watson, 2007; Garavan, 2007). This concern may be associated with some significant value it offers to HRM Theory and practice. Some scholars from the strategic management field bring out some of these areas that raise the need for interfirm alliances with an appeal to HRD. Pedler et al (1996) used a stakeholder perspective in their stages of the evolution of the learning company and pointed at knowledge issues that have implications on HRM such as career development and management development. Mintzberg et al (2003) consider HRM as an integral part of inter-firm alliances. Tiwana (2008) and Schilling (2008) look at interfirm alliances and their implications to technology and knowledge. Crook et al (2008) have studied strategic management using the Resource Based Value to stakeholder value creation and underscore the role of values and perceptions in developing hypotheses on how managers consider stakeholder demands. Hawley and Taylor (2006) indicate that interorganizational networks have a role in employee development.

Jackson and Schuler (2000) have thus used this stakeholder approach to HRM which has attained popularity within the SHRM literature and traditionally recognized highly in the organization theory and strategic management literatures (Hicks & Gullet, 1975; Jones, 2004). This partnership approach to SHRM has also been found to be consistent with a relatively new but increasingly popular approach to strategic

decision making, organizational performance evaluation and strategic realignment-the balanced score card. The approach combines financial performance with three other areas of concern: customers, internal processes, and the capacity of the organization for learning and growth. Excellent performance in these four domains is presumed to be required in order for any organization to succeed in implementing its stated vision and strategy. To use the balanced score card approach, an organization develops indicators of success in each of the four domains and then assesses itself against these performance indicators. The specific indicators typically reflect the concerns of a variety of stakeholders:

- Financial: shareholders e.g. revenue growth, cost reduction, productivity improvement, asset utilization.
- Customers' domain: market share, account share, customer acquisition, customer retention and customer satisfaction
- The internal business processes: processes that are most central to their value chain e.g. excellent customer service, innovation, low cost production.
- Learning and growth: measures that tap the organizations capacity for renewal and change. So concerns with measures such as level of employee satisfaction, retention rates, training opportunities, skill development.

Performance improvement in all these areas involves:

- Clarifying the organizational vision and gaining consensus around this vision
- Communicating this vision and aligning the behavior of all employees with the vision
- Setting targets, allocating and establishing milestones
- Using feedback and learning to make adjustments in the system.

These processes in turn have implications for numerous aspects of the organization's approach to managing human resources. Employees turn up at the center of most of the activities involved in implementing the balanced score card approach to strategic management and organizational performance. Factors such as who the company hires, the training they receive, performance goals and the reward systems that motivate performance, performance assessment and feedback system, executive development systems can affect customer satisfaction and retention, the value added by internal operations and the organizations capacity for future growth and learning. For example, the relationship between HR practices and customer satisfaction is explicit in a number of organizational practices for ensuring excellence (Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Payne et.al, 1998).HRM practices are key considerations in the guidelines used to evaluate organizations vying for the Malcolm Balridge National Quality Award. Customer retention rate has also been explained to be directly related with the employee retention rate

which is determined by the level of employee satisfaction. To meet customer demands for higher quality, companies maintain an environment conducive to full participation and personal and organizational growth for the employees. Suggestions for creating this environment are:

- Promoting cooperation such as internal customer-supplier techniques or internal partnerships.
- Promoting labor management cooperation such as partnership with unions.
- Use of compensation systems based on building shareholder value.
- Creating opportunities for employees to learn and use skills that go beyond current job assignment.
- Forming partnerships with educational institutions to develop employees or to help ensure the future supply of well prepared employees.

According to Clark and Beardwell (2007) this partnership approach has its origin within the HRM literature in the map of HRM territory developed by Beer et.al (1984) which recognized a variety of stakeholders in the corporation including shareholders, various groups of employees, the government and the community. The approach also highlights the legitimate interests of various groups and assumes that the creation of HRM strategies will have to reflect these interests and fuse them as much as possible into the HR strategy and ultimately the business strategy. The theory has been more applied in the prescriptive elements of the benefits to accrue from adopting a soft approach to HRM, i.e. one that seeks to enhance the quality and commitment of the workforce. Building on this model, Guest (1989) developed a set of propositions that combine to create more effective organizations:

- Strategic integration: defined as the ability of organizations to integrate HRM issues into their strategic plans, to ensure that the various aspects of HRM cohere and for line managers to incorporate an HRM perspective into their decision making.
- High commitment: defined as being concerned with both behavioral commitment to pursue agreed goals and attitudinal commitment reflected in strong identification with the enterprise.
- High quality: refers to all aspects of managerial behavior including management of employees and investment in high quality employees, which in turn will bear directly on the quality of the goods and services provided.
- Flexibility: seen as being primarily concerned with what is sometimes called functional flexibility but also with an adaptable organizational structure with the capacity to manage innovation.

The stakeholder approach to strategic management thus offers vital lessons for HRD theory and research on key aspects such as value creation, environmental response, organizational survival as well as potential areas for collaboration. However, the existing HRD and HRM theory has not developed and conceptualized a relevant framework suitable for research and theory building utilizing the stakeholder

theory. It is proposed that knowledge of the stakeholder theory is important in HRM and HRD for purposes of building interorganizational networks based on relevance and contribution to value creation activities of an organization. The stakeholder perspective bears several defining characteristics in that it is build on the theoretical foundations of Corporate Planning, Systems Theory, Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Theory out of which managers obtain a framework for integrative strategic management, necessary for the survival of the firm through a value based management, that responds to specific stakeholders in the environment (Freeman &McVea, 2001; Murrilo-Luna, 2008; Julian et.al, 2008).Some of the defining characteristics of this stakeholder theory to strategic management include:

- Provision of a flexible single strategic framework for dealing with the environmental shifts.
- Focus on the strategic management process rather than the strategic planning process.
- Central concern for the survival of the firm that leads to the achievement of objectives.
- A value based management that invests in relationships for ensuring long term success.
- A prescriptive and descriptive approach helping management to plan for the future by considering relevant strategic options that will influence stakeholders.
- » Identification of the specific set of stakeholders for each organization and their characteristics.
- The call to adopt an integrative approach to stakeholder management through strategies that benefit all.

3.8 A CASE FOR AN HRD BASED INTERFIRM LINKAGE

The learning orientation, the SHRD and the stakeholder perspectives so far discussed seem to pave way for organizations to pursue HRD based interfirm networks. The case for these inter firm networks can be established along several observations that arise from the multifaceted HRD literature.

The changed perspective to competition that embraces collaboration. Mintzberg et.al (2003) call for the adoption of the changed perspective to competition based on collaboration as opposed to that based on competitive rivalry. This collaborative competition is for the purpose of enhancing value creation for customers and stakeholders. There are HR related issues into this process of creating knowledge. Some scholars in the learning organization stream have proposed the same for facilitating knowledge creation, transfer and building of communities of learning and practice.

The need to build social networks and social capital. Social networks contribute toward a learning culture and help an organization's capacity to respond to environmental changes. Within the management literature, organizations are increasingly defined by their relationships with other organizations. Terms used include virtual corporation, virtual organization, network organization, Modular Corporation and the web. Recent empirical research in the broader organizational literature has identified that while the knowledge and information embedded within employees internal to the organization is important to the effective

functioning and performance of the organization, it is also becoming increasingly necessary to draw on the knowledge of agents outside the organization. An organization does not exist alone but operates in an open system, in which it constantly interacts with its outside environment by exchanging knowledge. Social network analysis can reveal patterns of connectivity which can inform strategies to improve performance, learning and knowledge sharing.

The transition to a learning society. Park and Kwon (2004) noted that the society has become a lifelong learning system in which people continue to obtain new knowledge beyond their school years as people cannot survive with only the knowledge they acquired in school. Companies thus need employees who can learn continuously and take responsibility for their own development, because adults who can learn in a self directed way are more likely to share each others knowledge, to identify the importance of interaction with others and to build new networks with others. Employees' self directed learning readiness is related to their job performance. Jackson and Schuler (2000) thus propose the formation of partnerships with educational institutions by organizations to develop employees or to help ensure the future supply of well prepared employees.

The Need to establish Competence based HR practices that support learning point at the need to build networks outside the organization. Ardichvili and Dirani (2005) identify four human capital strategies:

- Internal development (make)
- External recruitment
- Alliances
- Contracting

The need to consider the external environment in building competencies. Ozcelik and Ferman (2006) underscore the importance of considering the external and organizational environment in formulating competencies. Their approach points at factors such as economic, social, political, industry, strategic and competitive forces as well as the availability of human resources. The competency model should be installed to be aligned with organizational strategy. The success of long-term implementation of competencies depends on the alignment of competencies with the organization's vision. Competencies impact systems that actively support the organization's vision, strategy and key capabilities so that individuals can understand how their behaviors support these strategies. Competencies produce the most significant change and development for employees' performance when they are applied across a range of human resources development processes. Dooley et.al (2004) underscore the role of improving professional competencies arising from the need for multiskilled employees in organizations. The competency based training is used to clarify organization-specific competencies to improve human

performance and unify human capabilities with organizational core competencies. A competency model is a validated decision tool correlated to a specific group of activities that describes key knowledge, skills and abilities for performing those activities. The models are used as tools for Recruitment and selection assessment .developing curricula and other training materials, coaching, counseling and mentoring, career development, and Behavioral requirement benchmarking.

3.9 AREAS FOR INTERFIRM LINKAGES

The arguments raised in favor of an HRD based interfirm networks require the identification of suitable areas along which these linkages may be pursued by firms. From the broad range of literature that informs HRD practice, the paper proposes several areas for HRD network building among organizations: training needs analysis, technology transfer, corporate reputation, strategic management process, customer relationship management, benchmarking activities, and project management. Each of these is given a brief discussion.

Training needs analysis (TNA)

Watson (2007) identifies the role of interorganizational networks in the process of training needs analysis. Concerns for organizations here are best practices through exchange and collaboration. The approach identified seven levels for TNA as: extra-organizational, interorganizational, intra-organizational, organizational, departmental, group, and individual. Storberg-Walker and Gubbins (2007) indicate that understanding learning requires ability to examine knowledge flows between individuals as well as between levels. Learning organizations are essentially networks of learning relationships among individuals, groups and even organizations themselves as in interfirm alliances.

Technology transfer

Technology is understood from three types of technology (Grosse & Kujawa, 1992). Product technology refers to knowledge used to produce any product. Process technology refers to the knowledge used in production to organize the inputs and operate the machinery. Management technology refers to the knowledge used in operating a business. This knowledge goes through three stages:

- Invention: creation of new knowledge that may have application to business or industry.
- Innovation: the introduction of new knowledge into the market place. Innovation is invention that is commercialized.
- Diffusion: the spread of the new knowledge throughout the market, including markets in different countries and to different product applications.

Technology transfer is the diffusion of technology from the place of its introduction to other markets. It may take place through market transactions, with one firm selling a product, process or skill to another or it may be carried out within a firm through its network affiliates. Liu et.al (2006) grouped knowledge based technology into five categories, namely, knowledge of management, knowledge of external environment, knowledge of culture, knowledge of market and knowledge of technology.

Corporate reputation

Davis and Daley (2008) connect corporate reputation with the need for agility and responsiveness by organizations in a differentiated manner. McGuire, Cross and Murphy (2007) propose corporate branding approach to reputation building. Clardy (2005) noted that reputation can have important effects on organizational performance. Organizational reputation is defined as a perceptual representation that accompanies past actions and future prospects that describes the firms overall appeal to various stakeholders and constituency groups. A reputation is a representation or image of an organization held by people either external to and or members of the organization. Reputation mediates the relationship between the organization and any or all its stakeholder groups. Employee training and development practices affect organizational reputation. Organization's reputation is sensitive to the performance of its employees and employee performance is partially a function of how well the employee is trained. Employee training practices can be singled out as a major factor contributing to either building a reputation that is esteemed and respected or one that is vilified. Reputation building has implications for a number of HRD related activities. Jones (2004) uses an agency theory perspective which offers a useful way of understanding complex authority relationship between top management and the B.O.D and proposes a number of HRD related approaches: career development and governance mechanisms. Among the governance mechanisms are organizational ethics .Ethics represent moral principles or beliefs about what is right or wrong. Sources of these organizational ethics are societal ethics, professional ethics, and individual ethics. Several reasons are cited for the development of ethical rules, namely, to control self interested behavior, to confer a reputation effect that reduces transaction costs, to promote the good of society, well being of its members and creation of more value where people follow ethical rules.

Customer relationship **management**

Customer care activities are anchored on human resources of an organization. Cook (2002) underscores the role of human resource activities in preparing employees for delivering superior customer service and establishing strong value laden relationships with customers. She cites training and development, empowerment of employees and a sense of ownership, differentiation from competitors and continuous change. The relationship management has highlighted the role of integrative management perspectives

and employee retention Payne et al (1998) identify a relationship between customer retention and employee retention rate especially among Area service encounters

Strategic planning process

Weisberg et al (2008) note that due to external uncertainties and environmental changes organizations need to continuously adapt. This process of adaptation takes the nature of organizational learning, which is often realized through proactive strategic planning. Social networks play a crucial role as vehicles for successfully conducting such processes of organizational change. HRD is considered to be an important element of management that can enable networks to facilitate organizational change thus generating a competitive advantage for the firm. The HRD function can claim its impact by the development of leadership or top teams, the setting up of policies and rules thus fostering organizational responsiveness and flexibility, the utilization of innovative concepts such as action learning and mentoring in order to strengthen collaborativeness and finally the management of dynamic contexts. Marsick (2007) proposed a reframing of the way we think about our role in practice (organization's values and interests vis-a-vis those of many customers). Several approaches have been proposed for the organizations strategic management process with most scholars supporting the perspective that enhances learning (Johnson & Scholes, 2002; Barbuto, 2002; Golding 2007; Watson, 2007)

Benchmarking

Benchmarking has been widely used in several streams to enable organizations carry out continuous improvement processes. The quality management perspective has relied on Deming's cycle of plan-do-check-act to identify benchmarking as a process that enhances the establishment of excellent performance standards. Benchmarking attempts to provide these standards to organizations by measuring organizations operations, products or services against those of its competitors, a process that will involve continuous learning. Oakland (2000) defines the term as the continuous process of measuring products, services and processes against those of industry leaders or the toughest competitors and notes that it leads to the search for the best practices which leads to superior performance through measuring of performance, continuously implementing change and emulating the best. Benchmarking may be done internally, with competitors and generally across any comparable firm. Its relevance to HRD has been highlighted by Pedter et al (1996). Wilson (2005) and Armstrong (2006)

Project management

Project management has grown from the work of Frederick Taylor and Henry Gantt, whose original orientation had an engineering perspective, it has however evolved over the years to embrace a human resources perspective that offers learning opportunities to members that may benefit from HRD. The project lifecycle in particular has HRD related issues

cycle. An approach adopted by the European Commission to the project lifecycle starts the cycle at the programming level where sectoral or broad corporate goals are broken down into departmental goals. These become the bases for individual employee performance contracts. At the end of the project there is provision for a review to identify the major lessons learned for the purposes of continuous improvement. Many of the commercial projects embrace a stakeholder perspective that calls for collaboration among partnering organizations. One of the key success factors identified for managing the stakeholders is the requirement for human relations skills which HRD can contribute towards in development.

SECTION 4 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 MAJOR CONCERNS

So far the discussions point at the need for organizations to pursue interfirm linkages to strengthen their HRD practices in order to support the quest for organizational success. Organizational success in the context of a competitive environment will require continuous learning and renewal best facilitated by organization's HRD practices. It is these practices that necessitate organizations to seek opportunities for continuous learning and renewal among organizational members. The key questions that need to be addressed revolve around:

- What does it take for the organizations to consider an HRD related strategic partnership?
- What informs the managers in organizations in making decisions that will ensure interfirm linkages based on HRD?
- Under what conditions do organizations consider inter-organization partnerships that provide learning opportunities for their members?

To answer these concerns, the paper observes that HRD as demonstrated in the developed literature has a strategic nature and so are the decisions to pursue any collaboration (Kay, 2000). Pearce and Robinson (1997) have described strategic decisions of firms as those that pertain to an organization's relationship with its environment and pertain to decisions on what kind of an organization it should be. These decisions are also characterized by a future orientation, scanning of the external environment, involvement of top management, require significant levels of organizations resources and have the potential to impact the organizations long term prosperity. A major concern is establishment of distinctive competencies. Porter (1985) proposed differentiation as one of the strategies for building this distinctive competence, an approach that significantly relies on an organization's human resources to create and sustain the required levels of distinctiveness.

These perspectives seem to form major concerns for HRD scholarship highlighted in different streams of relevant HRD literature. The paper postulates a multifaceted approach for managers in making strategic decisions that would lead to an HRD-based interorganizational network. In developing a theory to explain and predict how managers will make these decisions, the paper takes a multidisciplinary approach that underscores the role of diverse factors that underlie the situational positioning of HRD in any context through the influence of national history, traditional values, economic systems, education systems, national cultural values, political systems, global politics and policies (Cox et.al, 2005; Dirani, 2006; Ke et.al, 2006;

Paprock, 2006; Paprock et.al, 2006). Thus the framework adopted for this paper as shown in Figure 1 relies on the following analytical frameworks:

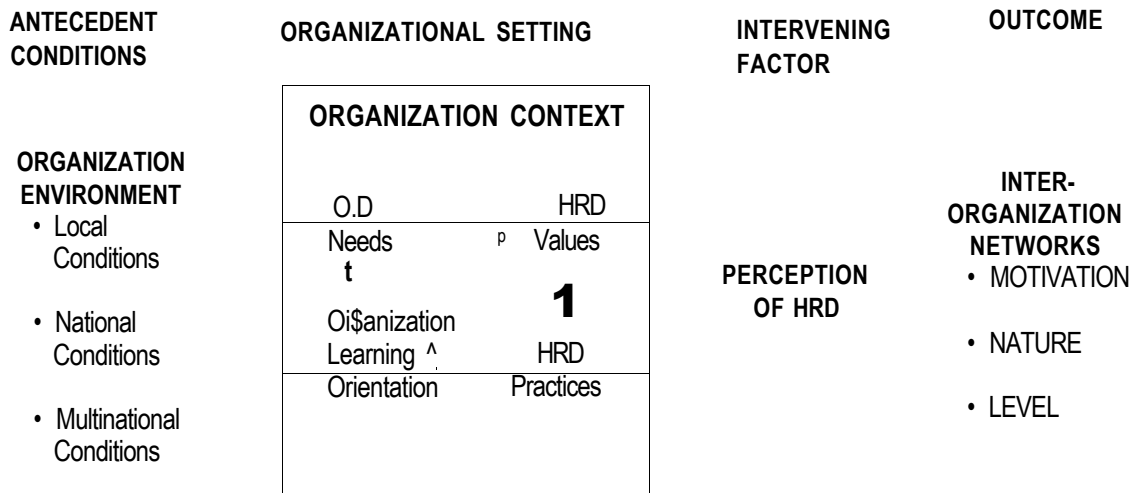
- The Resource Based View of the Firm (Golding, 2007; Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Newbert, 2008)
- The Resource Dependence Theory of the Firm (Jaffee.2001; Crook et.al,2008)
- The Organic Theory to HRD (Stead & Lee, 1996)
- The SHRD Framework (Garavan, 2007)
- The Culture Representation Theory (Erez & Early, 1993)

The Model represented by the Framework consists of four components:

- The organizations antecedent conditions likely to shape the design of organizational processes for HRD Practice;
- The organizational setting within which HRD is practiced;
- Managerial decision making under the conditions of bounded rationality; and
- The outcome of the decisions to pursue HRD based inter-organizational network

4.1.1 THE PROPOSED MODEL

FIGURE 1: THE HRD BASED MODEL FOR INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS



4.2 ANTECEDENT CONDITIONS: THE ORGANIZATION ENVIRONMENT

The emergence of organizations in any setting has been associated with the existence of societal needs that require satisfaction through products and services (Penrose, 1959; Hicks & Gullet, 1975; Jones, 2004). Jones (2004) connects the emergence of organizations in this context with entrepreneurship activities that create value for delivery to the organization's stakeholders. The creation and delivery of this value requires the recognition of opportunities to satisfy needs and then gather and use resources to meet

those needs. Forces in the environment however cause uncertainty and make it more difficult for organizations to control the flow of resources they need to protect and enlarge their organizational domains. According to Katz and Kahn (1966) all systems function within five elements, namely cultural, political, economic, technological and ecological. Of these five elements, the cultural has been associated with variations in HRD Practices and systems among countries and regions in the world (Dirani, 2006).

The set of forces causing these problems affect complexity, dynamism and the richness of the environment. Environmental complexity is a function of the strength, number and interconnectedness of the specific and general forces that an organization has to manage. The greater the number and the greater the differences between them, the more complex and uncertain is the environment and the more difficult to predict and control. Environmental dynamism is a function of how much and how quickly forces in the specific and general environments change over time and thus contribute to the uncertainty an organization faces. An environment is stable if forces affect the supply of resources in a predictable way, and unstable and dynamic if an organization cannot predict the way in which the forces will change over time. Environmental richness is a function of the amount of resources available to support an organizations domain. In rich environments, resources are plentiful and uncertainty is low because organizations need not compete for resources. Environments may be poor for two reasons:

- The organization is located in a poor country or in a poor region of a country.
- There is a high level of competition and organizations are fighting over available resources. In poor environments organizations have to battle to attract customers or to obtain the best inputs or the latest technology. The end result of these battles is greater uncertainty for the organizations.

The organization theory literature provides several suggestions on how the organization may survive in the context of a competitive and uncertain environment. The lifecycle theories have highlighted several challenges that an organization faces in its life cycle stages as the liability of newness and the liability of aging which require a proper match with the external environment. The institutional theory to the study of organizations indicates that, in order to survive, organizations must conform to the rules and belief systems prevailing in the environment, because institutional isomorphism, both structural and procedural, will earn the organization legitimacy (Scott, 1995; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Dacin, 1997; Deephouse, 1996; Suchman, 1995). Multi National Corporations operating in different countries within multiple institutional environments are typically under diverse pressures. Some of those pressures in host and home institutional environments are testified to exert fundamental influences on HRM practices (Rosenzweig & Singh, 1991; Zaheer, 1995). Businesses tend to perform more efficiently if they receive the institutional support.

The theory of inertia and change has proposed the niche perspective to interacting with the environment which is premised on two types of organizations: generalists and specialists. Specialist organizations maximize their exploitation of the environment and accept the risk of experiencing a change in that environment. On the other hand, generalist organizations accept a lower level of exploitation in return for greater security (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). Niche theory shows that specialism is generally favored in stable or certain environments. The resource partitioning theory relies on this niche approach to suggest several strategic options organizations may select to respond to market requirements such as market concentration and economies of scale (Carroll, 1985).

The sum total of the implication of the consideration of these theories by organizations for purposes of survival is that they point at the way in which the organization will align itself to perform HRD related activities to facilitate understanding of this complex environment suitable to enhance value creation and delivery. Garavan's approach to SHRD proposed a model of SHRD with four levels of context to understand the contribution of SHRD, the global environment, the internal business context, the influence of the job and the individual (Garavan, 2007). These levels highlight the importance of analyzing and interpreting the impact of context, recognition of the importance of multiple stakeholders and partnerships that have emerged in organizations in the design, development and implementation of HRD, emphasis on both horizontal and vertical linkages throughout (Meyer et al., 2008). Harrison and St John (1997) propose two basic postures for managing stakeholders: buffering and bridging. Buffering is the traditional approach for most external stakeholder groups and it is aimed at containing the effects of stakeholders on the firm. It includes activities such as market research, public relations, and planning. Buffering raises the barriers between the firm and its external stakeholders. In contrast bridging involves forming strategic partnership. This approach requires recognizing common goals and lowering the barriers around the organization. Partnering is proactive and builds on interdependence. It is about creating and enlarging common goals rather than just adapting to stakeholder initiatives. They propose a framework for determining the importance of developing partnering tactics and when it is appropriate to rely on more traditional methods. With this framework as a guide they have been able to identify a wide range of partnering tactics that can be used by management to manage their critical stakeholders and develop critical strategies. It is on this basis the first proposition of the paper is stated as:

PROPOSITION 1:

The antecedent organizational conditions will force management to establish organizational contexts suitable to generate sufficient levels of awareness of the external conditions constraining business survival in order to establish HRD supportive functions.

4.3 THE ORGANIZATION CONTEXT

The value creation concerns for organizations depend on how the organization uses its human resources and technology to transform inputs into outputs (Jones, 2004). The way the organization uses the resources determines how much value is created. The key distinguishing factor however is the human resource component as the amount of value created is a function of the quality of human skills that include ability to learn from and respond to the environment. An organization that continues to satisfy people's needs will be able to create more and more value as it adds to its stock of its skills and capabilities. The organization context in this setting needs to create a posture that will attain HR based distinctive competences, in which HRD should significantly contribute to. To create this posture, the paper postulates that an organization will need to address the organizational development needs, Organizational values that promote HRD, relevant HRD practices and an organizational learning orientation.

4.3.1 DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

Organization development (OD) is the process through which an organization develops the internal capacity to most efficiently and effectively provide its mission work and to sustain itself over the long term. Beckhard (1969) considered it in the light of planned organization-wide effort, managed from the top, to increase organization effectiveness and health, through interventions in the organization's processes, using behavioral science knowledge. Bennis (1969) considered it as a complex strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organizations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges. Burke (1982) emphasized the inherent change process designed to bring about a particular kind of end result attained through organizational reflection, system improvement, planning, and self-analysis.

These expressions of organization development bring out a set of needs that O.D programs are initiated to satisfy such as organizational effectiveness, employee development, increased professionalism and human resource based competitive advantage. O.D initiatives have been presented as part of an organization's human resource management system (Prasad, 1996), meant to enhance the organization's SHRM concerns for attaining the mission expectations of an organization. This further enhances the strategic partnership role HRM should play in the functioning of an organization (Dessler, 2003).

Within the value creation process, this SHRM perspective seeks to achieve an HR based competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is at the center of the resource based view of the firm (Golding, 2007; Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Newbert, 2008). Jones (2004) considers competitive advantage as the ability of one company to outperform another because its managers are able to create more value from the resources at their disposal. Competitive advantage springs from core competencies i.e. managers' skills and abilities in value creation activities. A competitive advantage can be attained if the current

strategy is value-creating, and not currently being implemented by present or possible future competitors (Barney, 1991). Although a competitive advantage has the ability to become sustained, this is not necessarily the case. A competing firm can enter the market with a resource that has the ability to invalidate the prior firm's competitive advantage, which results in reduced normal rents (Barney, 1986b). Sustainability in the context of a sustainable competitive advantage is independent with regards to the time-frame. Rather, a competitive advantage is sustainable when the efforts by competitors to render the competitive advantage redundant have ceased (Barney, 1991; Rumelt, 1984). When the imitative actions have come to an end without disrupting the firm's competitive advantage, the firm's strategy can be called sustainable. This is contrary to other views (e.g. Porter, 1985) that a competitive advantage is sustained when it provides above-average returns in the long run.

The resource based view has been a common interest for management researchers and numerous writings could be found for the same. Resource based view explains a firm's ability to reach sustainable competitive advantage when different resources are employed and these resources can not be imitated by competitors which ultimately creates a competitive barrier (Mahoney & Pandian, 1992; Smith & Rupp, 2002). RBV explains that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage is reached by virtue of unique resources which these resources have the characteristics of being rare, valuable, inimitable, non-tradable, non-substitutable as well as firm specific (Barney, 2001; Makadok 2001). These authors write about the fact that a firm may reach a sustainable competitive advantage through unique resources which it holds, and these resources can not be easily bought, transferred, copied and simultaneously they add value to a firm while being rare. It also highlights the fact that all resources of a firm may not contribute to a firm's sustainable competitive advantage. Varying performance between firms is a result of heterogeneity of assets (Perez Lopez 2005; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003) and RBV is focused on the factors that cause these differences to prevail (Grant 1991; Mahoney & Pandian, 1992; Amit & Schoemaker, 1993).

Fundamental similarity in these writings is that unique value creating resources will generate a sustainable competitive advantage to the extent no competitor has the ability to use the same type of resources either through acquisition or imitation. Major concern in the RBV is focused on the ability of the firm to maintain a combination of resources that can not be possessed or build up in a similar manner by competitors. Further such writings provide us the base to understand that the sustainability strength of competitive advantage depends on the ability of competitors to use identical or similar resources that makes the same implications on a firm's performance. This ability of a firm to avoid imitation of their resources should be analyzed in depth to understand the sustainability strength of a competitive advantage.

Thus to ensure sustainable competitive advantage, an organization will require a strategic orientation that facilitates continuous learning and environmental scanning to prevent current competencies from being depleted or make necessary improvements on current competencies in view of competitive and environmental developments. Thus proposition two is stated as:

PROPOSITION 2:

Organization development concerns for building sustainable competitive advantage will determine the strategic orientation for organizational learning, practice of HRD and HRD values.

4.3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CULTURE

Distinctive competencies that meet the RBV criteria have partly been associated with the organization's prevailing culture. Sporn (1999) proposed the adoption of Organization Culture as a suitable principle for facilitating a system of shared values consisting of norms and organizational behavior that is geared towards achievement of a common goal. Brown (1998), using a human relations approach to the study of organizational culture indicates that organizations exist to serve human needs. Organization theorists maintain the view that these needs are constantly changing due to constant environmental change. Consequently, studies on culture address the concern to respond to these changing needs through innovation. According to Brown (1998) organization culture refers to the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experiences that have developed during the course of an organization's history and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements in the behaviors of its members.

The concept of innovation has been widely used in HRD. Kontoghiorghes et.al (2005) look at innovation as an important outcome and benefit of the learning organization. Watkins (2005) defines a learning organization as one that has an enhanced capacity to learn and to change. Wills (1993) noted that HRD practice is most effective when practiced within a learning organization. From an HRD standpoint, Stewart and McGoldrick (1996) argue that organizations can be constructively conceived as learning entities. Learning organizations according to Stead and Lee (1996) adopt a proactive rather than a reactionary approach to change. This proactive approach gives birth to the idea of organizational transformation. Transformation is defined as the shift from one stage of existence to another which is entirely different and is particular in dealing with the new era. Senge (1990) and Kontoghiorghes et.al (2005) suggest a generative learning approach. This type of learning is associated with an organization's capacity to create. They point that it corresponds to the higher order needs of belonging from motivation theory at the three levels of HRD Analysis.

Learning organizations are expected to create conducive environments for employees to learn (Beardwell & Holden, 1997; Clarke, 2005). It is the learning of employees that seems to sustain individual and organizational learning. Slotte et.al (2004) indicate that this organizational learning places demands on organizations continuous efforts to provide employees with learning opportunities. In view of a competitive world characterized by globalization, rapidly changing technology, Kanter (1992) noted that it is only through the continuous learning of an individual employee that the organization is able to achieve effectiveness and ultimate survival. Jones (2004) notes that to be effective, an organization needs a structure and culture that foster adaptability and quick response to changing conditions in the environment. The organization needs to be flexible so that it can speed up decision making and rapidly create products and services. Measures of an organization's capability to innovation include the length of time needed to make a decision, the amount of time needed to get new products to market and the amount of time spent coordinating the activities of different departments.

There are two types of organizational learning, namely exploration and exploitation learning. Exploration involves organizational members search for and experimentation with new kinds or forms of organizational activities and procedures (e.g strategic alliances, networks). Exploitation involves organizational members learning ways to refine and improve existing organizational activities and procedures in order to increase effectiveness. This learning might involve implementing a TQM program to promote the continuous improvement of operating procedures. It is a more radical learning process than explorative, although both are important in increasing organizational effectiveness.

PROPOSITIONS:

The organization learning orientation adopted will largely depend on the state of the organization's environment that determines the organizational development needs.

4.3.3 HRD VALUES

Some aspects of learning are social in nature. The stakeholder approach embraced in both HRM and strategic management emphasizes investment in relationships based on a set of core principles or values (Freeman & McVea, 2001; Murillo-Luna, 2008). The values indicate what the organization stands for (Schendel & Hofer, 1979) and therefore an integral part of the strategy formulation and implementation process (Freeman, 1984). Values have been studied from both the organizational behavior and theory disciplines. Jones (2004) approach to the study of values connects them with an organization's culture and thus defines values as general criteria, standards or guiding principles that people use to determine which types of behaviors, events, situations and outcomes are desirable or undesirable. Organizational values are divided into two:

- Terminal values-desired end states or outcomes that people seek to achieve e.g. excellence, responsibility, reliability, profitability, innovativeness, economy, morality, quality.
- Instrumental values: a desired mode or pattern of behavior (e.g. working hard, respecting traditions and authority, being conservative and cautious, being creative and courageous, being honest, taking risks, maintaining high standards).

Terminal values are reflected in the organization mission statements and official goals which tell organizations members and other stakeholders that the company values excellence and has high ethical standards. An organization develops specific norms, rules and standard operating procedures that embrace instrumental values so that members understand the modes of behavior that they are expected to follow as they pursue desired end states. Joy-Matthews et.al (2004) consider values as part of an organization's mission expressed through its vision and core values that assist in the formulation of focused strategy and specific goals. Strategic goals need to be translated into plans and objectives at the operational level with specific actions and feedback pathways that allow assessments of the contribution of development.

Values are relevant to the development of HRD. Stead & Lee (1996) use the concept of the emergence of needs at the individual, organizational and national levels based on motivation as the basis for the transformation that leads to the emergence and development of HRD. Erez and Early (1993) relate the concept of values to needs at the cognitive level of the individual. They indicate that at the cognitive level, values become the cognitive representation of needs at the individual, societal and cultural demands. Further, they indicate that differences in cultural values reflect differences in motivation. Value orientations have therefore been studied with a view to understanding their influence on HRD decision-making. Bates and Chen (2004) are of the view that since the HRD profession is a goal oriented field dedicated to helping diverse work systems solve problems and improve, defining and measuring HRD value orientations is important because the orientations help to determine how HRD professionals perceive and make decisions about HRD activities and outcomes.

PROPOSITION 4:

The set of core values adopted in the organization's mission will reflect the key HRD concerns that respond to the requirements of the organization's environment.

4.3.4 HRD PRACTICES

Ericson (2006) notes that HRD plays an important role in organizational solutions to strategic issues through developing human expertise, employee training, work design and structure. In strategic HRD the manager becomes a strategic actor, managing change in a planned way using rational calculations. Swanson (1995) noted that the business environment requires that HRD not only supports the business strategies or organizations but that it assumes a pivotal role in the shaping of business strategy. As a

primary means of sustaining an organizations competitive edge, HRD serves a strategic role by assuring the competence of employees to meet the organization's present performance needs. Along with this, HRD also serves as a vital role in shaping strategy and enabling organizations to take full advantage of emergent business strategy. SHRD must be sensitive to both emergent and planned strategies. Whether strategy is planned or emergent has implications for the role of SHRD. Several approaches to the strategic management process have been identified which have implications on HRD practices. Golding (2007) identifies four approaches to the strategy making process in organizations: classical, evolutionary, processual and systemic approaches. The processual approach was developed by Quinn (1978) who observed that in practice, a strategy formation tends to be fragmented, evolutionary and largely intuitive. The logical instrumentalist view acknowledges the value of the rational analytical approach and identifies the need to take account of the psychological, political and behavioral relationships which influence and contribute to strategy. It considers organizations as sticky, messy phenomena from which strategies emerge with much confusion and in small steps. The foundations of the school are the cognitive limits of human actions. Human beings are influenced by bounded rationality, so one human being is unlikely to have all the answers to complex and difficult problems. Thus organizations approach to SHRM has a considerable influence on the strategic management process as to effectively manage the environment better than their competitors. Some writers have suggested that organizations need to adopt a learning open systems perspective. Mintzberg (1987)'s approach recognizes that planned strategies are not always realized strategies and that strategies can often emerge and evolve. He also notes the significance of the micro politics within organizations. The theme recognizes the inherent rivalries and conflicting goals present within organizations and the impact this can have on strategy implementation. In planned approaches, it is unlikely that SHRD will have any major role to play at the strategy formulation phase. It will make its most effective contribution at the strategy implementation phase. In contrast emergent approaches to strategy are embedded in organization's social architecture. Thus, most scholars in HRD provide a list of areas of practice that seem to agree with this and suggest organizational learning, individual learning and development, blended learning, training, management development, knowledge management, learning organization, coaching, mentoring, total quality management, performance management and project management (Armstrong, 2006; Beardwell & Claydon, 2007; Joy-Matthews et al, 2004).

PROPOSITIONS:

The identified relevant set of HRD practices in the organization are associated with the strategic learning orientation adopted by the organization.

4. 4 IMPACT OF MANAGERS' PERCEPTIONS ON MANAGERIAL DECISION-MAKING

Jones (2004) considers organizations as decision making machines. Organizational decision making is the process of responding to a problem by searching for and selecting a solution or course of action that will create value for organizational stakeholders. Ivancevich and Matteson (1990) indicated that decisions are looked at as some means through which an organization makes an attempt to achieve a desired state. In essence they form an organization's response to a problem. They noted that decision-making is the essence of managerial process. The strategic management process has been described as a decision making process due to the strategic choices that have to be made (Pearce & Robinson, 1991, 1997).

Holton III and Naquin (2005) indicate that decision-making is considered a key aspect of HRD interventions in maximizing the value of human capital in organizations. Joy-Matthews et al (2004) underscore the role of the managerial decision making in HRD. They observe that in spite of the acknowledgement that skills for communication, customer handling and team working are needed in organizations, managers and senior managers' abilities to rethink their approaches to sustaining competitive advantage and implement effective strategies limit interest in development. The fact that HRD is strategic in nature (Armstrong, 1999; Stewart & McGoldrick, 1996) points at the important role it plays in providing organizational solutions to strategic issues. This strategic role is seen through its emphasis on developing human expertise, employee training, learning, work design and structure. In strategic HRD, the manager becomes a strategic actor, by managing change in a planned way using rational calculations. Oczelik and Ferman (2006) strongly argue that one of the major decisions related to HRD is that of ensuring competitiveness in a competitive business world. They propose the idea of an HRD perspective for organizations that revolves around building sustainable competitive advantage by developing their human competence base. Organizations are therefore advised to install competence models that are aligned with the organizational strategies.

Sporn (1999) cautioned that effective decision-making touches on doing the right things and doing them right. Organ and Bateman (1991) in support of this observed that managers are expected to make rational decisions since these decisions will contribute to the success or failure of a whole organization. They indicated that good decisions are characterized by:

- Their quality in that the decisions will achieve some standard goal or objective
- Their acceptance in that those who will implement them will find the decisions appropriate.

The decision making in this setting is influenced by the managers' perceptual process as they have to make some sort of a strategic choice which requires a consideration of the behavioral factors influencing the process (Pearce & Robinson, 1991, 1997). Erez and Early (1993) state that adaptation to changes in a

complex environment requires an analysis of the cognitive mechanisms of information processing. They used the cognitive models of information processing to explain how information from the environment is selectively recognized, evaluated and interpreted in terms of its meaning to the individual and how it affects behavior. This information processing involves the concept of perception. Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) consider perception as a psychological process responsible for attending to organizing and interpreting sensory data. Ivancevich and Matteson (1990) and Organ and Bateman (1991) note that the concept of perception provides the basis for which an individual gives meaning to the environment and how one behaves in the environment through an evaluation process that seeks to identify opportunities for self enhancement and intrinsic satisfaction.

Scholars in organizational behavior have associated perception with the motivational state of needs (Luthans, 1992; Robbins, 2005; Organ & Bateman, 1991). It is this concept of needs that makes perception of particular concern in HRD. Beardwell and Holden (1997) pointed that lifelong learning, which is a central theme in HRD, implies continuous adaptation for the survival of the individual, organization and the society. This life long learning for continuous adaptation results in increased knowledge and improved skills that enlarge the individual's capacity to adapt to the environment and to change that environment. The process involves one's self concept in that, the external changes feed the individual's self esteem and confidence and enhance social status. The promotion of this is a major characteristic of a learning organization. Erez and Early (1993) show that the self as a major player in perception is modified by culture. They observe that since the self has the capacity for self-evaluation, it generates needs for self-enhancement and for the preservation of self-esteem. These needs are partly shaped by culture and partly by the unique personal characteristics of the individual. They point further that, through the self-regulatory process, the self constitutes the link between the macro and the micro levels of analysis. The self plays the role of selecting, processing and interpreting the environmental stimuli with respect to their contribution to their personal self worth and well-being. This self as the link between the macro level of cultural values and norms, the mesolevel of organizational process and the micro level of individual analysis evaluates the utility of managerial techniques according to certain norms and values which vary across cultures. From the multi level analysis approach, the value of the managerial techniques is determined by the extent to which they are perceived to contribute to the maximization of an individual's potential, satisfaction of self-generated needs and harnessing of human resources to the attainment of organizational goals.

Craig et.al (2006) observe that HRD decisions and actions are made on the basis of a philosophy whose foundations are beliefs. It is this philosophy that gives a worldview by which one looks through HRD related issues. Ruona and Lynham (2004) state that this worldview shapes and directs how one thinks

about the world, acts in the world and consequently sees the world. This world view has been used to demonstrate how HRD related activities such as learning have been variously understood in different parts of the world.

PROPOSITIONS:

Managerial perceptions of HRD will mediate between the organization context and the decisions to pursue HRD based inter-organizational networks.

4.5 INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS

Inter-organization networks are discussed along the strategic considerations for Inter-organization collaboration. Collaboration is a recursive process where two or more people or organizations work together toward an intersection of common goals. Structured methods of collaboration encourage introspection of behavior and communication. These methods specifically aim to increase the success of teams as they engage in collaborative problem solving. In the post-industrial era, this collaboration is considered as a condition of learning in the work place in which workers learn how to think, learn and apply information to a task. Workers need to engage in activities that allow them to approach problems from different vantage points, testing out assumptions, and redefining meanings. Workers need to engage in the social, collaborative exchange of ideas to pose hypothetical problems, general hypotheses, conduct experiments and reflect on outcomes.

Life-long learning in the workplace is becoming a necessity rather than an ideal. The need for collaboration is great and will continue. By facilitating collaborative methods of learning, organizations could help workers acquire individually and collectively the rapidly, changing knowledge required in the high-tech workplace. This collaboration across organizations is considered as part of the mechanisms for attaining a fit between internal and external conditions.

Beer (1980) pointed that an organization's capacity to achieve its goals and fulfill its members needs is a function of the extent to which there exists congruence between its people, processes and structures and its environment. Organization theorists view organizations as social inventions that are designed to achieve economic or other purposes while at the same time fulfilling member needs (Hicks & Gullet, 1975; Jones, 2004). Hicks and Gullet (1975) used a stakeholder perspective to indicate the survival of an organization is based on satisfaction of stakeholder needs. Beer's approach used the contingency perspective of management to indicate that an organization needs to build congruence or fit between its social structures

and processes with the individuals being recruited and the environment being served and identified four components that must be congruent as:

- People: through their abilities, needs, values and expectations.
- Process: through the behaviors, attitudes, and interactions within the organization at the individual, group and intergroup levels.
- **Structures:** through the formal mechanisms and systems of the organization that are designed to channel behavior toward organizational goals and fulfill member needs.
- **Environment:** through the external conditions with which the organization must deal including its markets, customers, technology, stakeholders, government regulations and the social culture and values in which it operates.

Jones (2004) used the resource dependence perspective to demonstrate how the networks may be determined. This perspective works on the basis that organizations are dependent on their environments for resources they need to survive and grow. The supply of the resources however is dependent on the complexity, dynamism and richness of the environment. The goal of the organization is to minimize its dependence on other organizations for the supply of scarce resources in its environment and to find ways of influencing them to make resources available. Thus an organization must simultaneously manage two aspects of its resource dependence:

- It has to exert influence over other organizations so that it can obtain resources.
- It must respond to the needs and demands of the other organizations in its environment.

The strength of an organization's dependence on another is a function of two factors: How vital the resource is to the organization's survival (scarce and valuable inputs) and the extent to which the resource is controlled by other organizations.

The choice of Interorganizational strategies for managing resource dependencies is dependent on the environmental conditions. Resource dependence theory points that the flow of resources among organizations is uncertain and problematic. To reduce uncertainty, an organization needs to devise inter-organizational strategies to manage the resource interdependencies in its specific and general environment. Managing these interdependencies allows an organization to protect and enlarge its domain. In the specific environment, an organization needs to manage its relationships with forces such as suppliers, unions and consumer interest groups. Two types of interdependencies have been suggested in the organization theory literature, Symbiotic and Competitive interdependencies. Symbiotic interdependencies occur when the outputs of one organization are inputs of another and exist between an organization and its suppliers and distributors. Strategies for managing these include reputation

management, cooptation and strategic alliances that involve networks, minority ownership, joint ventures, mergers and takeovers. The Competitive interdependences exist among organizations that compete for scarce inputs and outputs. Strategies used for managing these are collusion and cartels, third party linkage mechanisms, mergers and takeovers.

The institutional theory proposes a legitimacy building mechanism for organizations to increase their ability to grow and survive in a competitive environment in the eyes of their stakeholders (Jaffee, 2001). New organizations suffer from the liability of newness and may die because they do not develop the competences they need to attract customers and obtain scarce resources. To increase their survival chances as they grow, organizations must gain acceptability and legitimacy from their stakeholders by satisfying the latter's needs. Institutional theory argues that it is important to study how organizations develop skills that increase their technical efficiency. It also argues that to increase their chances of survival, new organizations adopt many of the rules and codes of conduct found in the institutional environment surrounding them. The institutional environment is the set of values and norms that govern the behavior of a population of organizations. Strategies for attaining legitimacy include:

- Coercive isomorphism-when an organization adopts certain norms because of pressure exerted by the other organizations and the society in general. As the dependence of one organization on another increases, the dependent organization is likely to become increasingly similar to the more powerful organizations.
- Mimetic isomorphism-when organizations intentionally imitate and copy one another to increase their legitimacy.
- Normative isomorphism-when organizations come to resemble each other because over time they indirectly adopt the norms and values of other organizations in the environment.

Weigl et.al (2008) further identified five dimensions of inter-organizational structures, formalization, standardization, frequency, intensity and reciprocity which are associated with the flexibility and ease of information exchange.

The above perspectives to inter-organization relationships highlight the opportunities that exist for the human resources of the organization. There are inherent learning opportunities, intensive use of human intellect, knowledge transfer and constant updating, management development and career development. Through these, organizations able to adapt aggressively to changing external conditions and particularly to innovations that obsolesce their earlier skills. Den Berg et.al (2006) advocate for strategic knowledge development, investment in education, retraining and professional development as part of their HRD practices as a prerequisite for surviving in the knowledge economy. These combined with the needs for

survival are expected to provide the motivating factors for an HRD based inter-organization network. However, the type and level of the network will depend on the structural ties and the environmental conditions. Thus it is proposed that:

PROPOSITION7:

Structural conditions of the organization's institutional environment have influence on the type and level of network pursued.

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