

STUDY ON HOW ORGANISATIONS IN MICROSTATES LEARN WITHIN AN
ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

By

Janis Rosa Greenaway

Student No: 139040709

Dissertation Supervisor: Jill Collinson

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ABSTRACT

The dynamic global economy has brought about new dimensions in how organizations conduct their day to day operations and consequently determining their existence, revenues, and competitiveness in the global and local market. This research aims at examining how organizations in microstates learn within an organizational context. The research was conducted using questionnaires as the qualitative research method. All data obtained was then tabulated and compiled in a bar graph. The research involved systematic collection and investigations of the various data using firsthand experience shared by the participants and as a result, increase the understanding of organizational learning. The sample size was 24 individuals working in different business sectors. The questions were based on organization learning; their familiarity with the term, their experience, knowledge, practice, and suggestions.

After the research had been conducted, it was clear that most individuals understand the definition of organizational learning, and they have practiced or have already seen it in practice and can confirm its viability. However, they raised concerns about different organizational cultures and structures that are a barrier to this transformative corporate practice; the investigation found that organizations with a hostile environment discourage learning among individuals, and the concern has been shared by different scholars.

Various changes are yet to be taken within organizations especially in the public sector to create a learning environment. Such include: reducing bureaucracy, training managers to promote organizational learning who will then change the organization's culture and encourage the rest of the employees to participate in this perpetual tradition. Some of the factors that were found to drive learning within organizations include staff promotion, individual motivation, staff training and changing communication structure of the workplace.

The research has a solid argument on what microstates can practice being able to promote learning within their organizations despite the numerous challenges they face. First, it has to start from the top then it will be systematically adopted in the bottom; the role of leaders has been mentioned on various researches, and this one does not place less emphasis. After changing the top, the managers then need to realize that an individual should be willing to learn through acquiring knowledge and skills from different day-to-day situations or training. Once the individuals accept learning, then the spirit is automatically passed to the next workmate and after some time the whole organization at large learns. The different scholars that have been quoted in this research all support that individuals build an organization. Also, the availability and regular update of technology have also been cited as one of the key factors driving individuals to accept learning within the organization.

However, some cited researchers have argued that the direct impact of organizational learning cannot be quantified although learning can be proven when the organization improves performance and competitiveness.

This research aims to help different leaders and also individuals in both the public and private sector to work hand-in-hand to steer growth in their organizations and as a result increase productivity which will enhance their chances of survival and boost their profits.

Keywords: Organizational learning, Microstates, Public Sector, Learning Environment, Knowledge

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Organizational Learning as a concept is widely recognized as one of the growing interest in literature on organizational development and management theory. It has growing importance not only for academics but also management practitioners. Organizational Learning has implications for all forms of organizations whether public or private sector and even NGO's. Organizations survival increasingly depends on the ability to learn quickly and adapt to rapidly changing environments.

The recent global economic and financial crises have had significant implications for small, medium and large economies. While the extent of the effects may differ depending on the framework of analysis, it is widely accepted that some have either withstood the pressures well or are rebounding from the initial impacts with varying degrees of successes. Larger states and economies tend to be more resilient largely due to the fact that they have greater access to resources whether natural, financial, human or otherwise. Microstates, due to their limited resources are required to be proactive and innovative to be economically competitive. One way in which this can be achieved is by adapting quickly and becoming more responsive to external shocks and changes occurring in the global environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In micro island states and small economies the role of organizational learning has a special yet very practical significance as they cope with external economic shocks which create unavoidable ripple effects across all sectors within the domestic economies. They are faced with unprecedented challenges as they try to target scarce but vital resources to sectors and services that require those most. One of the most consistently recurring themes among developing countries, especially micro states, is the need to improve performance and productivity in the public sector in order to facilitate the revitalization of the private sector and stimulate economic activity and growth. Ultimately, how an organization learns determines how the organization performs. Barrett et al (2012:2) states, “the ability of any organization to survive and adapt to changes is rooted in its ability to learn”.

This dissertation examines how organizations in micro states learn within an organizational context. It further examines the factors that facilitate organizational learning in micro states and whether there are differences in the responses of micro-states to the global turmoil. Public sector organizations face considerable risk and exposure to the effects of changes in the external environment given their varied but necessary interaction in activities such as policy formulation, regulatory oversight and service delivery in any economy.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have advised micro states and under-performing economies which are especially driven by single sectors to diversify their economies. This calls for organizational renewal at the very core and a revision of national policy

formulation. The processes of refocusing and renewal unquestionably are linked to the concept of organizational learning. For this combination of renewal and learning to take place it is imperative to first of all, have a clear understanding of the concept of organizational learning and how organizations learning in micro states as opposed to larger economies and countries with greater access to natural resources.

Almost invariably the literature on organizational learning has leaned heavily towards research undertaken in a private sector environment where the context, drivers and goals of knowledge creation may differ (Rashman, Withers, and Hartley 2009). The scale and complexity of public sector organizations justify more focused research and attention of management research scholars (Ferlie, Hartley and Martin 2003) as it pertains to how these organizations learn; what factors trigger the learning process and what is the impact of the creation of new knowledge.

Over the past five years it has been observed that the term “public sector reform or modernization” has become even more overused but it is important to determine how this context relates to organizational learning. Further, the researcher believes that there are very distinctive characteristics and facilitators of organizational learning in micro states and developing economies that advances the debate that a deeper understanding of organizational learning in the public sector warranted an aims to contribute to the existing body of work on the topic.

There are factors that make organizational learning inherently more challenging than in the private sector, for example “organizational fragmentation, a fixation on learning outcomes assessment, the artificial separation of policies and services, and the difficulty in measuring the

link between organizational learning and policy outcomes” (Vince, 2000 and Common, 2004 cited in Barrette et al. 2012 p. 2)

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The author believes that this research is important in a practical sense in that it will provide answers and solutions to real problems which the public service is expending resources to address either through direct budgetary allocation or funding and technical assistance from donor agencies and development partners. This research will also add to the existing literature on organization learning and knowledge creation by focusing on a non private sector model or theory.

1.4 Aim

The aim of this research is to address “How organizational learning contributes to performance in public sector organizations in small island states: Institutionalizing organizational learning in Antigua and Barbuda” The research will attempt to meet the following objectives:

- investigate the factors that facilitate organizational learning and knowledge in public sector organizations in micro states and small economies
- compare the facilitators of public sector organizational learning facilitators in the private sector

- examine how differences in facilitators affect organizational learning in public sector organizations and their responsiveness to change.

1.5 Research Questions

The author hypothesizes that there are distinct factors that drive organizational learning in the public sector in larger economies from those of smaller economies. This research proposes to answer a number of key questions in an attempt to determine what are the facilitators or factors of organizational learning:

1. What are the factors influencing organizational learning public sector organizations?
2. What factors distinguish the public sector organization in a larger economy from those of smaller economies or micro states?
3. What is the relationship between organizational learning and policy implementation?
4. How are learning organizations created in the public sector?

2.0 Literature Review

Organizational context and well as the role of individuals and groups in the adaptive process of Small states have certain inherent attributes that negatively affect their development prospects (Brown 2010:46). These attributes can range from small population sizes to geographical factors to lack of natural resources and underdeveloped state institutions. Whatever the reasons are small or microstates may be more vulnerable and at particular disadvantage when compared to larger counterpart states as it relates to their development prospects and alternatives. According to Garratt (1999) it is not difficult to see why an increasing number of organizations aspire consciously to become learning organizations. In addition, organizational learning according to Probst et al., (1997)() is a competitive advantage that organizations will have to rely on to remain relevant and sustainable. The increasing competitive complexities and uncertainties of a globalized world compel individual as well as organizations, public as well as private sector to learn. Learning has to become more entrenched, rigorous and characteristic for both individual and organization. This ensures that both individual and organization are able to adapt to changes rapidly. The ability of organizations to learn is now more than ever being taken seriously. In many Organizations individuals have the general ability to learn and apply competencies effectively in many different aspects of their various work situations (Garratt 1999).

For many years the public sector has enjoyed relative stability and a degree of protection which national governments were traditionally able to provide but are now seeing fictitious barriers eroded by liberalized markets, deregulation and other changes in the global environment. While Grindle (1997) asserts that the public sector in many developing countries is performing poorly or barely in some cases, it is suggested that with the creation and transfer of new knowledge that organizations can renew and reposition themselves for a more competitive environment. What is

more, public sector organizations are now expected to compete with the private sector in key markets which were once government controlled such as telecommunications, health and transportation. Again these are among some of the possible factors that influence thrust towards the creation of organizational learning model that responds to prevailing contexts within in the public sector.

Organizational learning is “not just a fad prone to organizational bulimia...” (Garratt 1999:202). The constant pressures for change and development are primarily influenced by competition in the external environment (Yeo 2007) and compel organizations to learn as they too change and adapt. Consequently, the interest in a deeper understanding of how organizations learn continues to increase not just among academics but practitioners as well.

How will organizations compete, survive and grow? The answer is that they will have to become more flexible, recognize and anticipate changes that are occurring and select the best course of action along with alternatives to respond to these changes. In other words organizations will have learn and unlearn faster than their rivals in order to improve the level and quality of collective performance.

As a response to the rapid pace of change and influences of globalization many “governments and public service organizations are trying to secure fundamental changes in the governance, design and delivery of public services” (Ferlie, Hartley and Martin 2003). This appears to be the common link between governments of large and small states alike: advancing public sector reform or modernization of the delivery of public services as a major development priority (Ferlie et al 1996). The achievement of such a paradigm shift in public sector management will depend ultimately on the learning ability of public sector organizations. It can certainly be agreed upon by all that the learning cannot be the exclusive domain of the private sector, thus, a more

critical understanding of how public sectors learn is warranted but more so whether or not the factors that promote or influence learning are homogeneous in states of dissimilar sizes, location and culture.

2.1 Role of the Public Sector

The public sector drives national competitiveness. It is responsible for the creating the conditions and structure that enables the effectiveness and growth of the private sector (Hartley and Skelcher 2008). Public sector organizations play a very decisive role in the implementation and administration of government policies on different levels, whether at the level of local government, the provincial or national level depending on political system. They also manage “complex interrelationships between the state, the market and civil society” (Benington 2000).

In small microstates such as the Caribbean islands the management of public sector organizations distinguishes itself from larger developing counterparts because it operates in a complex policy and political environment coming under the control of politicians and supported by a legislative framework (Hartley and Skelcher 2008). The aim of public sector organizations is the creation of public value which cannot necessarily be measured by balancing accounts and generating profit but rather delivering high quality services to citizens as well as balancing competing stakeholder interests (Moore 1995).

Like the private sector public organizations are no longer insulated from the constant and increasingly unpredictable changes that take place outside of their boundaries. Both forms of organizations respond to pressures that cut across sectors but government customer centric policies and increased demands for improved performance and representation in the public sector

place a premium on organizational learning as a catalyst for change while the private sector is driven by market forces such as competition and profitability (Hartley and Benington 2006).

2.2 Factors Influencing Organizational Learning

The strategic direction which many governments are pursuing indicates that there are fundamental shifts in the way public sectors are managed. Changing consumer demands, technological advancements, increased competitiveness resulting from deregulation and increased market access are among factors that drive internally the restructuring of public sector business processes and operations.

Forces external to the public sector are greatly influencing the way in which public services undertake reform in order to respond to changes in the global arena. The size of the state is a key determinant of the structure and role of its public sector and has a direct influence how public sector organizations learn.

For decades the literature on organization theory has not reached consensus on a definition of organization or organizational learning that can be regarded as universally accepted. Much of the literature has leaned towards an acceptance of the more academically accepted concepts of organization and organizational behavior as concepts synonymous to organizational learning. However, an increasing number of scholars have been critically rethinking these traditional views (Kelman 2005; Barrette et. Al 2011).

Like the private sector a wide range of organizational contexts exist in the public sector. While it may be tempting to conceive the public sector as homogeneous the fact is that the public sector is a complex, dynamic and evolving institution interconnected through systems, structures and policies. We must, therefore, not only consider but accept that that if the purpose, drivers,

catalysts and key actors are different between sectors, (Hartley, 2006), it is possible that the nature of knowledge and knowledge creation differs also. Despite the temptation to equate public and private sector learning to be substitutable public management has its own particular features that make it different and so principles and theories of learning developed in the private sector may not be readily transferrable to the public sector.

2.3 Public and Private Sector Distinctions

In order to enhance our understanding of how public sector organizations learn there are important and significant distinctions that must be made. Some of the early literature postulated that the differences resided in the principal goal of the organization, that is to make profit if it is a private sector entity while the public sector had the responsibility of social amelioration in the provision of services (Lachman, 1985). However, this view has matured significantly as the boundaries between the two sectors become increasingly blurred and the complexities and interconnectedness are unavoidable. Nonetheless, some of the fundamental distinctions that should be made are:

- the level of direct political exposure and control in the public sector
- the organizational structure and culture
- competitive environment that drives organizational survival
- autonomy and decision-making authority

These basic (not exhaustive) distinctions enable us to put into some context how individuals and groups at varying levels with an organization interact and learn. This also reinforces our understanding that context conditions the facilitators of organizational learning.

Patnik (2013) believes that the lack of capacity and ability to learn and unlearn quickly in some countries are among of the principal reasons that they have been unable to take advantage of opportunities that result from changes in technology and shifting economic boundaries. This may be especially acute in micro states especially if there are weak institutional structures to foster or enable learning.

2.4 Continuing Importance of the Public Sector and the Public Services

For many years and to large extent our understanding of key management concepts such as organizational learning, knowledge creation and knowledge management have been shaped primarily by research in the private sector (Rashman et al. 2009). This dissertation along with a growing body of work supports the position that the public sector has proved to be sufficiently fertile for the development of and contribution to organization theory. According to Ferlie, Hartley and Martin (2003) it would be misleading to assume that learning flows in one direction, that is to say from the private to the public sector. As a matter of fact researchers are now beginning to shift focus to the public sector as a source of knowledge creation capable of contributing to management research and theory. It can be argued that because such little research on organizational learning has been focused on the public sector the potential for greater growth and innovation in public organizations remains untapped. Instead organization theory that is developed in the private sector is broadly applied as homogeneous to the public sector

environment without taking all of the inherent nuances and heterogeneity of both sectors into account.

Because public sector organizations provide an untapped source for a deeper understanding of how individuals and organizations learn within a context that is under-represented in the literature. For that reason this dissertation is guided by the belief that the scale and ambit of public sector activities are sufficiently wide and complex to justify a more profound understating of how organization and management theories that affect the management of public sector organizations develop and to more accurately represent the sector in a way that research has greater acceptance and applicability.

Although the literature is relatively limited on the contributions of the public sector to the development of organizational learning theory researchers are agreeing that the nature and scale of government and public organizations signal their importance which can no longer be overlooked by researchers and managers as it has the potential to add significant value to the theory of organizational learning. Ferlie et al. (2006) argue that the boundaries of public sector organizations are more permeable than ever creating an interdependency with the private and civil society as well as between nation and international bodies. As such there are increased learning pressures on public sector organizations to adapt and respond. These exigencies are certainly not unique to developed countries. As a matter of fact microstates grapple with understanding and integrating learning as a strategic response to some of the “wicked problems” that they confront. A fundamental question which must be answered is how do public organizations in microstates learn and what factors facilitate this learning? Hartley (2008) posits that learning pressures in the public sector are derived from changing consumer and stakeholder expectations. Knowledge sharing then becomes pivotal in creating value in the public service as

a derivative of learning pressures. This would suggest that on some level knowledge acquisition and learning must become institutionalized in the structure of the public sector. This, therefore, means that organizational and inter-organizational learning will be key if greater public value is to be created. Greater emphasis will have to be placed on issues such as policy formulation and policy implementation whereby it is demonstrated the various stakeholders are not working in silos but rather sharing knowledge to the extent that it facilitates performance improvement and creates greater value for the citizenry.

2.5 Microstates

Characteristics of Microstates

There are some states that because of their small size and geographical location they are particularly vulnerable environmental, social, economic and other global phenomena. These are known as microstates. Microstates are defined as countries with an average population of less than 2 million between 1970 and 2009. Using this definition and taking into account the period up to 2009, there are about 42 microstates. The vast majority of microstates are small islands located in the Caribbean, the African and the Pacific regions. Characteristics such as location, climate, and size, create a variety of comparative advantages as well as disadvantages for microstates. A deeper understanding of the interplay between these characteristics may offer further insights as to some of the factors that drive organizational learning in these states.

Unique characteristics

Small geographical size and small size of domestic markets: Generally, microstates are characterized by their small geographical surface area. Of the 42 microstates 70 percent are

islands which are relatively very small even when compared to the smallest of European countries. As a direct consequence of their small sizes the domestic markets too are proportionally small as the level of demand domestically is insufficient to justify higher levels of production. The small size also impacts the level of attractiveness to foreign direct investment as scales of industrial operations may be limited as a result of limited and available space for expansion.

Armstrong et al. (1993) suggests that the microstates are usually less favorable for the development and deployment of indigenous technologies. This, undoubtedly, impacts the potential for investment in research and development which inevitably affects the acquisition of knowledge and learning within in public organizations.

Small population size: Small population size is one of the more pronounced characteristics of microstates. This has an impact on many levels. Firstly, population size directly affects the domestic labour markets in terms of the availability of skilled labour. Secondly these populations tend to exhibit high levels of interconnectedness. In such small populations there is likely to be deep familial and other social connections that reflect the national culture and transposed to the organizational culture.

High degree of openness: Microstates are usually very open economies. Shocks in the external environment tend to have a ripple effect in the domestic economies of microstates. There usually high levels of import and low export coupled with high transport costs as a consequence of the geographical location.

Source: World Development Indicators.

Large size and cost of the public sector: One of the major disadvantages of microstates is the inability to achieve economies of scale whether in trade and commerce or in supplying public goods and services (Imam, 2008).

2.6 Competitive Advantages of Being a Microstate

While it may appear that being a microstate only results in disadvantages it may be argued convincingly that these characteristics also serve as advantages. For example, a culture where social homogeneity is dominant is likely to result in a more cohesive and coordinated response to environmental shocks. (Streeten, 1993).

2.7 Organizational Learning

Authors such as Garvin (1993) point to the fact that there is still no consensus on the definition of some key terms in management like learning, organizational learning and learning organization. For many, organizational learning as a concept has always been related to the acquisition of knowledge. Because of its analogous social structure it was believed that an organization learns in the same way that other organisms do. This interpretation began to take shape as competition became more globalized and the increase in technology not only affected production and marketing cycles but removed many technical and capacity barriers that existed between large and small firms and large and small countries. It holds true that there is a correlation between the process of organizational learning and the process of individual learning. Psychology offers us a behaviorist perspective on organizational learning in that it places the individual at the center of the learning process and so as the individual acquires knowledge the

organization grows. This perspective in the literature suggests that all organizations are capable of learning. The survival of an organization as with the case of organisms depends on their ability to adapt which is tied to the ability to learn. As changes occur in the environment species are forced to change behaviors in order to adapt. This takes place on two levels, the individual and the social.

Senge (1990:3) believes that a learning organization is “where people continually expand their capacity to create the 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 to see the whole together.”

Whether as an individual or as a group the process of learning from a behavioral perspective involves new behaviors learned as a result of associations between stimuli and reactions to them (Maier, Prange and Rosentiel 2001). Much of the early literature on the behavioral learning postulated that individual learning had implications for an organization although it could occur unintentionally as a result of alternative action; learning is observed behaviors modeled by others in similar circumstances and environment; interpretation between existing knowledge encoded in the organization and new alternatives; making casual inferences from ambiguous information (Maier, Prange and Rosensteel 2001); learning also operates on a conscious cognitive level where it is a motivated activity.

Similarly learning occurs in groups within an organization. In the process knowledge is aggregated and shared through the interaction of individuals within a group. The collective learning process facilitates an accumulation of knowledge which is stored and retrieved by members of the group. Group learning has significant implications for how organizations learn as more organizations

have come to accept that the spectrum of competencies required for survival competitiveness depend on how knowledge is acquired, shared and managed for organizational success.

“When you ask people about what it is like being part of a great team, what is most striking is the meaningfulness of the experience. People talk about being part of something larger than them, of being connected, of being generative. It becomes quite clear that, for many, their experiences as part of truly great teams stand out as singular periods of life lived to the fullest. Some spend the rest of their lives looking for ways to recapture that spirit” (Senge, 1990:13).

As organizational learning theory develops a number of perspectives have emerged. Some have favored and reinforced positions of particular social and scientific disciplines in an attempt to reflect the changing scenarios of economic, social and technological realities. As such theories on organizational learning must be capable of offering a greater level understanding of how organizational learning contributes to organizational performance and success especially as the is a growing importance on the management knowledge assets.

The concept of organizational learning has been by different disciplines in diverse ways in the literature over the past five decades. There is a dilemma in that this divergence is brought into focus as there is uncertainty as to whether these differing views add to the literature or create a widening chasm of knowledge for researchers.

2.8 Perspectives

Early scholars of organizational learning such as Cyert and March (1992), March and Simon (1958) adopted the decision-making and adaptation perspective. These authors believed that organizational learning was triggered by some force occurring in the external environment, that is to say outside of the organization. They postulated that organizations have a set of internal

rules and variables which are taken into consideration as they respond to an external disturbance. Whenever this process occurs the impact is that the system (internal) is modified in some way and is embedded in the organizational memory. Thus, the organization's response to external stimuli and its adaptive behaviors that it assumes compel it to reconfigure its goals, procedures, internal structure, etc. This was seen as the organization memorizing these various combinations and interplay between both external stimuli and internal forces. Authors such as March and Olson (1976) further developed this perspective by defining the concept as experiential learning where individual cognitive abilities, beliefs, preferences and attitude contribute to the alternatives available to the organization as it modify and adapts its responses to changes in the environment. Levitt and March (1988) added to this concept by defining learning through routinized behaviors within the organization. These routine encode individual behaviors as a result of interpreting results from a confluence of information sources which may be outside of the organization.

The decision-making and adaptation perspective offered a foundational understanding of how organizations learn. While it was thought early that organizations learned through their ability to respond to a changing environment by relying on accumulated internal knowledge as a source of alternative responses to change but this was later developed to include the individual experiences, culture, beliefs and other knowledge sources and contributing factors or facilitators of organizational learning.

The cognitive and knowledge perspectives authors such as Argyris and Schon (1978) and (Cook and Yanow 1993) extend the decision-making perspective of organizational learning to include cognition and knowledge. This perspective postulates that organizations learning like individuals as they are endowed with similar capacities. Also this perspective understands that

organizational learning like individual learning takes place in an organizational context. As such organizations learn as individuals but in an organizational setting. This takes into account the convergence of factors and dimensions of learning that are transferred to the organization and become embedded in the organizational memory which influences changes as circumstances change.

Organizational learning does not only operate on the individual learning level and as such Cook & Yanow, 1993 expand on the cognitive and knowledge perspective by arguing that the learning environment in an organization is a collective learning environment. Therefore, the acquisition and distribution of knowledge by groups in an organizational setting is distinguished from the individual as their constructions of reality influence the process of learning. Cultural changes and interpretations can be linked to organizational learning. For example, an organization that has acquired and functioned with relative autonomy and is highly proficient with technology may be more likely to accept and introduce changes such as the introduction of new software or equipment than organizations that are less autonomous and highly manual or labor intensive.

Another important perspective of organizational learning is action learning. While many authors have focused predominantly on the cognitive processes of learning others have argued that true learning takes place when there is a reflective process that follows. According to Revans & Pedler, 1997 learning is a result of having experience, meaning that individuals or groups must be able to interpret available alternatives created by the cognitive process (stored in memory) and put them into action.

These learning perspectives are important to development of organizational learning theory, however, all have been developed in the context of private sector organizations almost exclusively. This does not invalidate the importance of the contributions made by the private

sector to shaping our understanding of organizational learning. What has become apparent is that little attention has been paid, historically, to the public sector as a viable and valuable source for the development of organization and learning theories. There are no known justifications offered in the literature as to why management research has tended to focus so heavily on one sector. However, there is some acceptance in the literature that the characteristics associated with organizational learning in both sectors different and not only warrant equal attention but a more et al., 2009).

2.9 Perspectives on Organizational Learning

Barette, Lemyre and Corneil (2012) are among very few researchers who have focused on the facilitators of organizational learning in the public sector. The unit of analysis for this work is the Canadian public service which is typical of the focus that the literature habitually takes, in that, while there is a departure from the traditional private sector models it concentrates specifically on a large country/developed country context. The researchers not only recognize and acknowledge the value of organizational learning to the process of renewal of public service organizations in Canada but also aim to measure the facilitators that are relevant to the public sector. The authors assert that there is a link between the improvement of the policy-making capacity and policy implementation and organizational learning in the public sector. The study also seeks to establish measures of the organizational learning facilitators in an attempt to better understand how to create learning organizations in the public sector environment (Barette, Lemyre and Corneil 2012). The authors demonstrated a very clear balance of the dominant theoretical perspectives of the topic while recognizing the shortfalls of the literature in terms of the depth of previous research in the public sector.

As a departure from previous approaches in understanding organizational learning the authors define public sector organizations as the specific context for learning with influences distinct from those of the private sector. Additionally, the research highlights the various approaches that some studies have employed such a classification of the organizational type, technology use or even strategic choice as organizational learning facilitators. This restrictive approach may have limited our understanding to some extent of organizational learning. An important accomplishment of this research is that the authors inquired as whether or not it could be affirmed that the principles of organizational learning or the facilitators were universally applicable to all public sectors and whether there were other factors, internal or external to the organization that impacted on process of learning.

One of the limitations of this research is that apart from focusing exclusively on the Canadian public service as the unit of analysis it did not clearly articulate a position or perspective on the process of learning. Because the public sector operates under distinct rules, organizational structure and even legislative framework learning and knowledge acquisition are conditioned by interconnected and permeable dimensions such as individual capabilities, internal processes, organizational culture, access and use of technology etc. While these are all internal they are influenced by external factors as well. Consequently, the research focuses significantly on the individual and organizational dimensions as being the primary facilitators to public sector learning in the Canadian public service. This in some regards might have limited the application of the findings and knowledge gained from this research to public services that mirror or are capable of creation similar conditions.

Matthews, Ryan and Williams (2010) examine organizational learning in the Australian public sector from a decision-making and adaptation perspective. The authors understand that managers

are the agents of organizational learning and renewal as the environments change (Argyris and Schon 1978 and Burgoyne 1994 cited in Matthews, Ryan and Williams 2010) and as a consequence are the principal actors in the transfer of knowledge in the organization. This particular research focuses on the role of specific agents of change within public sector organizations and their responsiveness to environmental changes as a catalyst of learning. This perspective places the individual in the center of the learning process as the main facilitator of learning but also takes into consideration individual absorptive capacity and internal processes and structure of the organization. While this work has added to the extant literature the findings are limited to select public sector organizations in the Australian Public Service which again has particular relevance for countries of similar sizes and context.

This research is admittedly restricted to two public agencies in the Australian Public Sector but it is further restricted in its treatment of learning as a response to imposed changes or changing environmental conditions. The principal methodology used is interviews with senior managers. The findings are quite useful but do not add considerably to the development of the organizational learning literature. The utility in this study is that it reinforces that action-learning perspective as managers not only perform mental exercises but contribute to the learning process as there is an externalization and combination of knowledge with other actors in the organization to create new knowledge. Therefore, the research should have focused on the organizational learning.

Rashman, Withers and Hartley (2009) conducted a systemic review of the literature on organization learning and the contributions of the public sector to the development of organization learning theory and to date it appears to be one of the most respected and credible work done in this area. The authors of this work take a very critical view of the literature on how

theories on organizational learning have developed with the primary source of knowledge being the private sector. They argue that the public sector is sufficiently large, complex and dynamic to warrant particular research attention as a contributor to theoretic developments. The authors set out a very clear theoretical understanding of organizational learning and set out to investigate that factors that influence learning in public sector organizations; similarities and differences with the private sector and what are the issues affecting both contexts. The authors also pay particular attention to key concepts that were previously inadequately addressed in the literature regarding organizational learning in the public sector such as the inter-organizational complexity of the public service, slow pace of adaptability and rigid operational frameworks. This is central to the learning process within and between public service organizations and performance improvement since the goals and strategic orientations differ so greatly in both sectors.

Pokharel and Hult (2010) view organizational learning as a process that involves “acquiring, interpreting and sharing information to create meaning in a learning environment”. The authors conducted their research studying a US public sector organization (social services) and concluded that while there are varieties of organizational learning its degree and rate of success are the functions of a learning environment and therefore, facilitates learning. The research also examined carefully the dynamics of the internal environment and how these impact learning. While this study provides a good analysis of environmental elements and how they facilitate organizational learning it is possible to deduce that the extent or level influence of the various internal and external drivers may differ even when the factors of learning are constant as learning may be facilitators differ from sector to sector and organization to organization. The study takes no account of regional and local culture and how they impact on organizational behavior of individuals and groups between and among each other in particular organizational types.

Patnaik et al. (2013) acknowledge that organizational competitiveness depends on the ability to learn, adapt and change. Also learning is causal can and should be an asset integrated into the organizations arsenal of competencies and resources. The authors recognize that the literature on organizational learning is dominated by the contributions of private sector learning and offer an important critique of the failings of the management literature. Their research is focused on how the development of a learning culture in the educational institutions of the public sector influences organizational learning. Culture is fundamental to shaping the attitude and willingness to learn and is therefore, viewed as a prerequisite of organizational learning. So an organization's behavior potentially changes as new mental models, processes, norms and structures are introduced and shared between members of the organization.

Additionally, the study posits that there are two basic ways in which organizations learn: from its own experience and from that of others external to the organization. This study also makes a very important contribution to our understanding of how factors such as culture, leadership, organizational structures, processes and other organizational mechanisms can either hinder or facilitate the process of organizational learning. One limitation that is noted is that the focus is sector specific and likely culture relevant as it takes place within the diverse Indian education system.

Organizational learning can be very time sensitive and highly influenced by organizational learning pathologies (Mason 2005 and Schein 1996 cited in Greiling and Halachmi 2013). According to the authors, organizations tend to relapse into customary or routinized modes of operation and mental models by accepting standards such as 'not falling below the industry benchmark' to be an indicator of organizational success. The research suggests that organizational accountability can promote and facilitate organizational learning. Internal control

and performance monitoring systems that continuously assess the performance of members of the organization are important because they ensure that information is available for use in determining alternatives in response to change. In other words an accountability framework contributes to or facilitates organizational learning. The authors view of systems of accountability as enablers of learning is somewhat novel and possibly controversial in that they equate or apply the same level of treatment to both organizational improvement and organizational learning.

For Nonaka, Toyama and Byosiere (2001) the creation of knowledge in organizations is a dynamic process that takes place on several levels: individual, group and organizational. Organizations do not merely process information mechanistically. Organizations create and respond to problems, find solutions and in the process reshape their environment in an interactive process between the various individual and groups in the organization. While some early scholars of organizational theory viewed the organization from a perspective of information processing Nonaka, Toyama and Byorsiere (2001) believe that the organization is better defined by its actions and interactions from which knowledge is created. The authors believe that knowledge is a creation of social interaction between individuals within and across organizations in a process of socialization, externalization, combination and internalization (SECI). The contribution of this concept of how knowledge is created within an organization is significant as it outlines how the individual and group come together in the learning process. Another significant contribution is how to manage the creation of knowledge to the benefit of the organization. The authors depart from traditional approaches of knowledge management and propose instead of a top-down or bottom-up model a middle-up-down model whereby managers, team leaders and other key actors facilitate knowledge creation. Middle managers and others are

placed in the middle of the process which fosters a more targeted approach for the creation of new and relevant knowledge

This work, however, is as other in the literature focus on private sector organizations in developed countries and make no reference to small states or developing countries.

Yeo (2007) examines organizational learning in the Singapore public sector and its contribution to the understanding of management by undertaking a systemic review of the various theoretical perspectives on the topic and conducting a qualitative investigation of several senior public sector managers. This has particular relevance to the present dissertation to the extent that it is a small island state but does not fall within the definition of microstate as its population exceeds two million and is one of the twenty of the world. Largest economies The primary focus of the research is how organizational learning is or can become a source of organizational performance, competitiveness and success. The author is guided by the belief that learning in organization occurs on three levels: individual; team; organizational. The research presents a very interesting perspective of organizational learning in Singapore in that there is a greater thrust to institutionalize organizational learning as a source of economic competitive advantage. This is a useful research as Singapore is a micro-sized state with a large economy and may be able to deepen our understanding of how physical size determines whether the learning facilitators in Singapore are common to other small states and economies.

Mayden (2011) like many researchers point to the fact that organizational learning is a critical and coveted intangible asset that drives competitiveness and organizational success and does not regard the public sector as an exception but as conforming to the same pressures for survival and renewal. The author asserts that what is needed is to transform public sector organizations into learning organization in order to facilitate consistent organizational learning. This can be

achieved by creating a 'learning climate' where the organization creates flatter, decentralized, more autonomous structures that encourage innovative thinking and creativity and knowledge sharing between and among members of the organization. The establishment of values and norms that support building a learning culture and the improvement of leadership capacity to learn are all key components of a learning climate which is foundational for creating learning organizations.

The author does provide a sound understanding of organizational learning as a management concept and reinforces this with references to theory from noted scholars and practitioners. The proposal is quite logical that a move to create learning environments will facilitate organizational learning but the central point of this argument is being able to create and manage new knowledge in public sector organizations will lead to improved and sustainable performance. While it is accepted that knowledge is a primary ingredient of learning other learning dimensions were not sufficiently examined which might have extended the applicability of the findings to other organizational types. There is a greater focus on the collective learning process than the individual and on internal factor than environmental. Very scant attention is paid to the political and economic realities that confront public sector organizations and the pressures they create which may have a direct contribution to organizational learning in the public sector.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a description of how the information will be collected and analyzed, the justification of the preferred research method; including a comparison with other methods. The chapter also contains the sample size, the philosophical approach, the challenges faced and how some of them will be countered and its advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, there is an explanation of the design of the research questions, why the questions will be chosen and the procedure for the distribution of the samples. The main objective is to help anyone accessing the research in future understand the significance of the method and the source of all information in this investigation.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

Research problems in the social sciences can be investigated using two major philosophies-positivism or anti-positivism. Positivism involves observation as a way of studying human behavior; it links social science to human science i.e. a social event can be explained using natural science methods (Watts and Stenner (2012). Different assumptions are made in the positivist paradigm, which is then combined to be able to come up with a sensible conclusion; the observations are then supplemented with quantification methods to obtain precise research findings. Critics however, believe that this method “lacks the regard for the subjective states of individuals” and that “it regards human behavior as passive, controlled and determined by external environment” (Dash 2005, para 5) hence it has become increasingly unpopular. Anti-positivism methods, on the other hand, seek to differentiate society and natural science.

Proponents of this view believe that natural science and social science should be distinguished on

grounds that “the natural sciences were concerned with finding causal explanations for external events, while the human sciences were concerned with grasping the meaning of the individual’s experience of and in the world” (Hayes 2000:7).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is a blue print of systematic methods and procedural arrangement used not only in data collection but also in analyzing specific required information (Zikmund, Babin et al. 2010). It entails detailed information on the type of research to be conducted, the data source, how it will be sampled, the steps and measures to be utilized when collecting the data and a clear plan of data analysis (Babbie 2011). A quality research report solemnly depends on the account of its blue print or rather the master plan. (McDaniel and Gates 2007; Zikmund, Babin et al. 2010).

This research on organizational learning, factors that influence the process, differences between organizations in large states and microstates and their relationships involves people, how they desire to develop and their interaction within an organization (Senge 1990). Hence the choice of both closed-ended questionnaires (the respondents will be required to give a short and simple answer; either yes or no) and open-ended (the respondent can give an answer based on his/her knowledge).

3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research seeks to explore the following:

- a) How the organization has shaped the individual.
- b) The influence that the norms of the public organization have had on the actions of individuals.
- c) The trend and pattern of public bodies in microstates
- d) Identify the relationship between these public organizations

The best approach to obtain the required information is the use of questionnaires, which is a quantitative Positivist Research Method. Apart from being objective, this method is the most reliable scientific approach. The research method can be attributed to Auguste Comte and later redefined by Émile Durkheim, a sociologist. This Human Behavior scientist argues that cause and effect of a particular incident or situation can be identified by finding a correlation in different variables. This method is not only precise when researching human behavior, it provides the advantage of collecting accurate results since the researcher cannot interfere with the results (Heshusius & Ballard, 1996).

Critics of this paradigm believe that human beings have consciousness and can make decisions based on their individual reasoning, and the natural world cannot be compared to the society. Anti-positivist believes that people have symbols, norms, rules and values that define their culture. Therefore a researcher needs to interact with the respondents to obtain an in-depth understanding into their day-to-day lives hence apply non-scientific research methods (Stockman, 1983).

3.5 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires are one of the most efficient ways of collecting data in social sciences since the respondents answer from their level of understanding, at their convenience and without being coerced (Bulmer, De Vaus, and Fielding 2004). Questionnaires have become increasingly popular with social science researchers since they guarantee a researcher some level of certainty i.e. the recipient is just required to fill what he/she has been asked and can be distributed over a large population in a very short time (Bechhofer and Paterson 2000). Different types of questionnaires are defined and categorized as per question entities and details, there are those with defined logical arrangement of questions (Structured questionnaires) and those with undefined arranged questions (Unstructured questionnaires)

Unstructured questionnaires on the other hand, depending on the audience and expected quantity of data can further be classified into smaller entities which include those with openly placed questions, specific and direct questions, those carrying mixed questions and also those carrying questions asked through pictures (Beri, 2013).

3.6 Advantages

3.6.1 Cost effective

Large samples will be easy to obtain without physically going to every respondent as the questionnaires could be circulated via mail. Apart from being cost effective, it is one of the best time-saving methods of data collection (“Survey Research and Questionnaires”, n.d).

3.6.2 Clarity

The questions will be well-researched and easy to understand. This will make answering the questions easy for every participant, enabling the researcher to garner a deeper understanding of what organizational learning is and how those in microstates learn to cope with daily global economic changes (Research and Consultation Guide 1-6, n.d).

3.6.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire can be disseminated by the researcher or by any number of persons without any effect to its validity and reliability. The results can easily be quantified by the researcher or by the use of any software package. In addition, the analysis of questionnaires can be done very easily as compared to other forms of research instruments. Also, the quantified data can be used to compare and contrast other research methods and therefore this can be used effectively in measuring of change. Finally, the positivists believe that quantitative data can be used to create new theories and / or test existing hypotheses (Learning, I. (2016). *9. The advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires.*)

3.7 Disadvantages

3.7.1 Indecisive

Despite giving the respondents the freedom to fill the questionnaires at their convenience, it is difficult to tell the amount of thought used in answering the questions or whether the person that will be handed the survey will be the one who filled it especially the questionnaires that were delivered via mail (Research and Consultation Guides 1-6, n.d.).

3.7.2 Inconclusive

Given that the size of the space allotted for answering the questions relied on a general assumption of the size of information that could be gotten from a single question, it might have limited respondents to some answers if the space was too small or on the contrary, getting too much irrelevant information that was time-consuming for analyzing and grouping. If the space was too big consequently it could have denied an in-depth answer compared to a method of interviewing where you can follow up a question and get a more clear understanding from the respondent (Ackroyd and Hughes 1981).

3.7.3 Biases

Same questions are sent to all the participants regardless of the fact that different people normally have different perceptions or interpretation of a question, and information might have been collected based on a respondent's feelings and emotions. Hence, even the honesty of a participant cannot be judged as opposed to face to face interview (Research And Consultation Guide 1-6, n.d.).

3.7.4 Lacks validity

A respondent may not be truthful and there is no way to tell. As well, it is difficult to deduce how much thought a respondent has put in before responding to the questionnaire. Also, s/he might not reason out the questions in the context of the research questions topic. The respondents have the discretion of reading and understanding the questions in their own point of view hence the interpretation might be in different perspective depending on the understanding. For example what is 'good' to someone may be 'poor' to someone else, therefore there's a level of data parity that is not acknowledged.

In addition, since the researcher has the authority and jurisdiction over the development and the creation of the questionnaire, during the period of omission and inclusion of questions, researchers make their own decisions and assumptions as to what is and is not important...therefore they may be missing out on something that is of importance(Learning, I. (2016). *9. The advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires.*)

3.8 SAMPLE SIZE

The biggest challenge to any researcher is deciding on the size of the population that represents the target population and consequently allows a valid conclusion to be made. However, different statistics experts have come up with various strategies to counter this challenge; a researcher can use randomized statistical methods or cluster sampling and stratified sampling which are sampling techniques based on probability when the population is too significant (Fisher, 2006).

In this research, a combination of cluster sampling and a stratified sample will be used. To sample in this technique, and have more accurate results, a stratified sample group will be selected. The staff in the public sector will be divided into homogeneous subgroups, and a random respondent is selected from each cluster. The homogeneous groups will be drawn from all ranks of the Public Service to include Senior and Middle Managers, Education Officers, Technical Officers, Accountants, Financial Officers, Legal Officers, Police and Immigration Officers, Librarians and general workers such as the Junior Officers.

The advantage of this is that the respondents from each subgroup will represent the homogenous minority subgroups (the organization) and the population as a whole (public sector) (Thompson, 2013). In this case, the people working in the public sector within St. John's, Antigua. The

organizations that the respondents will be drawn from various Ministries and Departments namely Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Legal Affairs and Public Safety, Ministry of Tourism, Establishment Department, Ombudsman, Legislature Department, Prime Minister's Office, Treasury Department and the Labor Department. There will be three participants selected from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, four participants from the National Public Library and two participants selected from the other eight Ministries/Departments. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), the research method dictates the sample size. In this approach, a representative sample is needed from the population where, from the questionnaire findings, the researcher can make a generalization. Based on the amount of data that can be collected from this qualitative data collection method used, the sample size would be small.

In this research, the sample size will not be a reflection of the target population. However, Fisher (2006) writes that this decision might pose the risk of giving false data based on selection bias; non-response biases and under coverage. Nonetheless, selection biases will be avoided by choosing a sample that shares the same characteristics as the target population (i.e. working in the public sector), and the respondents will be scattered across the city.

The range of precision i.e. confidence intervals and level of trust, will not be estimated since a census on the number of people working in the public sector could not be obtained (Dattalo, 2008).

Data will be collected from 26 male and female respondents drawn from the public sector in St John's since the research aim was to get an understanding how the organization function and what programs are in place for Organizational Learning.

3.9 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

A list of purposes is first developed to have an effective questionnaire which can be adopted from the literature review. Secondly, a draft questionnaire is made where a variety of questions are developed from the list of purposes where different approaches are used to come up with relevant views and answers. Thirdly, the best answering method for each question is determined i.e. whether closed or open ended or both. Lastly, the questions are reviewed, to make them as simple as possible. After preparing the questions, a pilot test is undertaken with people who are familiar with the topic and those who will not participate in the main research exercise; the individuals advise on further revisions that can be made to improve the questionnaire. A good questionnaire should be easy to understand and designed in such a way that the respondents will provide the correct and honest answers that will be easier to analyze (“OERL: PD Modules: Writing Questionnaires: Key Topics”, n.d).

3.10 METHODS OF DELIVERY

3.10.1 Email

Most of the questionnaires will be sent via individual email addresses. The method is a reliable source as the investigator cannot physically travel to all the participants. Despite emails bearing individual names, the respondents are guaranteed that their addresses would not be shared.

Individuals are more likely to participate and provide honest responses to sensitive questions when they are assured of privacy which further increases the validity of the process (“Structured Questionnaires – History Learning Site”, n.d.). Online surveys have limited and rigid options, these survey modes do not allow for interactions between interviewers and respondents (McCabe, Couper et al. 2006; Zikmund, Babin et al.2010).

3.10.1.1 Advantages

Cost Effective

The method is cost-effective since no much cost is needed when coming up with results or formulating question since most people have adopted email addresses as the quickest and cheapest way to communicate (“Survey Research And Questionnaires”, n.d.).

Detailed Response

Individuals will more likely give detailed answers to each question from their level of understanding of the topic since they are already guaranteed of anonymity. Hence they can freely express their views without fear. Emails also facilitate quick communication in a situation where the respondent require some clarification compared to the old postal service which can take days to be delivered (“Survey Research and Questionnaires”, n.d.).

3.10.1.2 Disadvantages

Unwillingness to participate or respond

Due to lack of physical presence, respondents are more likely to delay responding and sometimes even fail to respond. The method is argued to be inadequate to understand some forms of information – i.e. changes of emotions, behavior, feelings etc.(Research and Consultation Guide 1-6, n.d.).

Personal Delivery

However expensive and time-consuming, Walliman (2014) notes that this is the most efficient method of delivery as it guarantees high response rate from the respondents as well as assist the participants in understanding some of the questions as they can seek clarification in a difficult question. During the delivery, the respondents can as well be persuaded to participate in the process and also get clarification if he had refused to participate by email or post.

3.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

3.11.1 Validity

The ability of a scale or measuring instrument to measure what is intended to be measured is called validity (Leedy and Ormrod 2010; Zikmund, Babin et al. 2010).The major validity measures that should be considered by researchers are content validity, criterion validity and construct validity (Malhotra 1999; Zikmund 2000). These measures were also employed in this research. To assure face or content validity, items can be generated from a number of sources including consultation with experts in the field, proposed respondents and a review of associated literature. In addition, a key strategy in item generation is to revisit the research questions

frequently and to ensure that the items reflect these and remain relevant (Malhotra, Hall et al. 2008; Leedy and Ormrod 2010).

In this thesis research, one method of ensuring content validity will be used and this will be an exhaustive review of the literature.

3.11.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the repeatability of findings in such a case that if the study were to be done a second time, it would yield the same results and if so, the reliability of the data is proven. If more than one person is observing behavior or some event, all observers should agree on what is being recorded in order to claim that the data are reliable. (*Introduction: Reliability and validity.* (2016)

3.12 OTHER PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN USED FOR THIS TOPIC

3.12.1 Observation

Here's an ethnographic qualitative data collection method that has been in wide employment in social sciences for decades (DeWALT and DeWALT 2011). Defined as “the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” by Marshall and Rossman (1989:79).

An example of observation methodology used in studying organizational learning is research by Robert E. Neilson (1997) where he explores Collaborative Technologies and Organizational Learning.

Despite the likelihood of the people being observed tending to behave in a certain way, especially when they realize that there is a stranger; observation will allow the researcher to come up with questions that are culturally relevant to the people under surveillance. In addition, this method is expensive, time-consuming, and not conclusive; the researcher is likely to recruit a wrong informer who might be influenced by his/her political or religious beliefs, the observations are likely to be biased since his gender, race and beliefs are likely to affect how the researcher interprets his/her observation or in some case even leave out key information as noted by DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) (DeMUNCK and SOBO 1998).

3.12.2 Interviews

A formal qualitative research method where the researcher takes the interviewer position and engages on a one on one personal question and answer conversation with the participant, in the process the researcher can make follow-ups or clarifications at that particular moment. However effective, poor interviewing skills can result in poor data collection (Valenzuela and Shrivastava 2008). The duo lists the following types of interviews:

3.12.2.1 Informal interview

Here the interviewer takes the direction of the conversation and adapts with the interviewee as much as possible.

3.12.2.2 Guided interview

The interviewer approaches each interviewee in the same way with the same questions although the interviewers are allowed adjusting a little bit.

3.12.2.3 Fixed-responses

The interviewees are provided with a variety of issues and required to provide answers only from a list of provided questions

3.13 ETHICAL ISSUES IN THIS RESEARCH

These are accepted norms and code of conduct in any investigation that should be upheld (Kumar, 2011). This research will rely on the goodwill (voluntary participation) of respondents and adhere to high standards of professionalism and confidentiality. No vulgar, politically incorrect, racial, gender-sensitive or any other discriminatory words will be used in the questionnaires. First, the introduction to the questionnaire clearly assures that the privacy of the participants will be maintained. Secondly, the respondents are made aware of the purpose of this research, which is strictly for academic purposes. Adhering to these accepted norms will increase not only the chances of participation but also the truthfulness of the provided answers (Kumar, 2011).

4.0 RESULTS

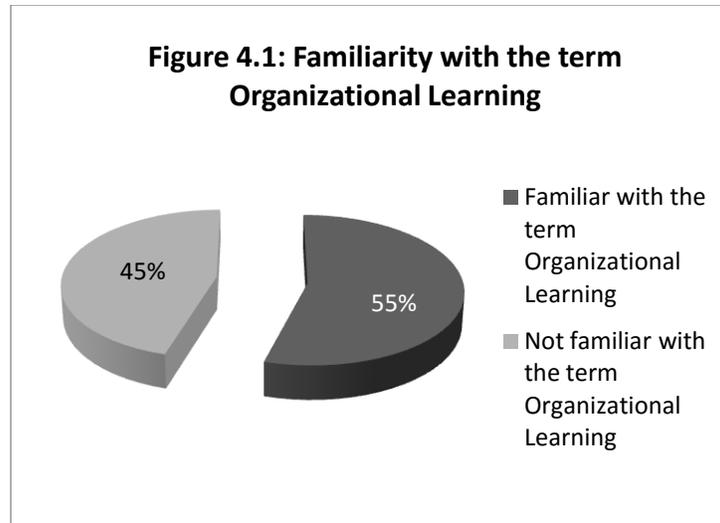
This chapter explains the results obtained from the questionnaire disseminated to a small sample size of participants within the public sector organizations. Results play a major role in this project because it provides a clear picture of the thoughts of individuals within organizations pertaining to what should be done or changed. The responses of the twenty two (26) participants of which six (23%) were male and twenty (77%) were female, showed their understanding of the terminology organizational learning and were familiar with what was presented in the questionnaire. Participants, being familiar with the term, enabled them to have an idea of what other questions were asking.

4.1 Questionnaire

4.1.1 The Term Organizational Learning

Questions answered by several individuals showed they understood the definition of the term organizational learning and were familiar with what was asked of in the questionnaire. The questionnaires gave a good impression to the final results. Participants, being familiar with the term, made them have an idea of what other questions needed.

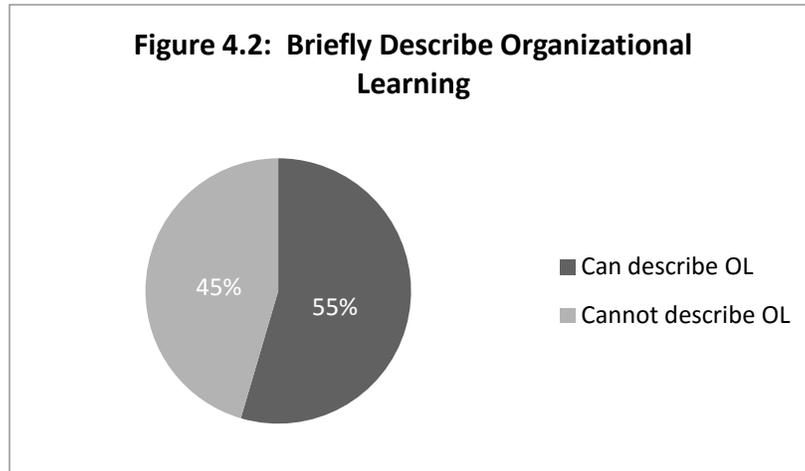
The respondents were asked if they were familiar with the term Organizational Learning of which (Figure 4.1) fifty five percent (55%) stated that they were familiar with the term while forty five percent (45%) said they were not familiar with the term.



Learning over the years has been defined as a process of absorbing, understanding and responding to new changes. Learning within organizations is different due to different culture practiced by the firms.

4.1.2 Brief Description of Organizational Learning

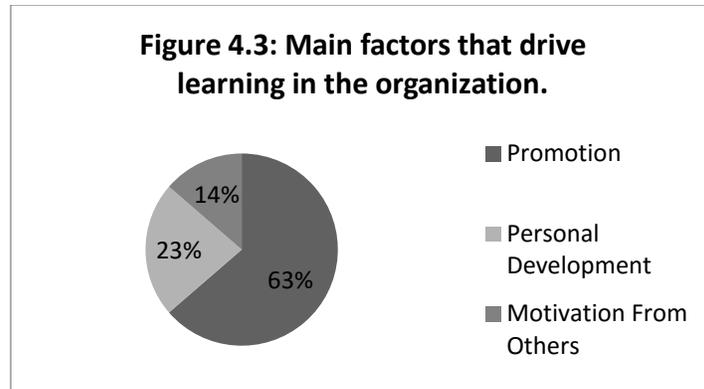
Individuals have a different thought as to what organizational learning is. Learning happens in the organizations on a daily basis, but it takes a willing individual to absorb and understand. Learning within an organization should be adaptive and practiced by each and everyone to help to cope with daily economic changes (Garud & Karnøe, 2001). When asked to briefly describe the term Organizational Learning (OL) (Figure 4.2) fifty five percent (55%) of the respondents were able to briefly describe the term and forty five percent (45%) were not able to briefly describe the term.



4.1.3 Main Factors that drive Learning in Your Organization

Individuals in organizations need drive, motivation and training to keep them going. In accordance to the questionnaires given to various participants, it was confirmed that the main factor driving learning is promotion, rewarding staff by acknowledging their hard work, training workforce, structure of work should be equal to all and finally make the working environment be a free zone. These factors are similar to every similar question answered in the questionnaire, therefore, shows that staff is to get satisfied with organization structure first. It is until then that such individuals can absorb what they learn on a daily basis and learn.

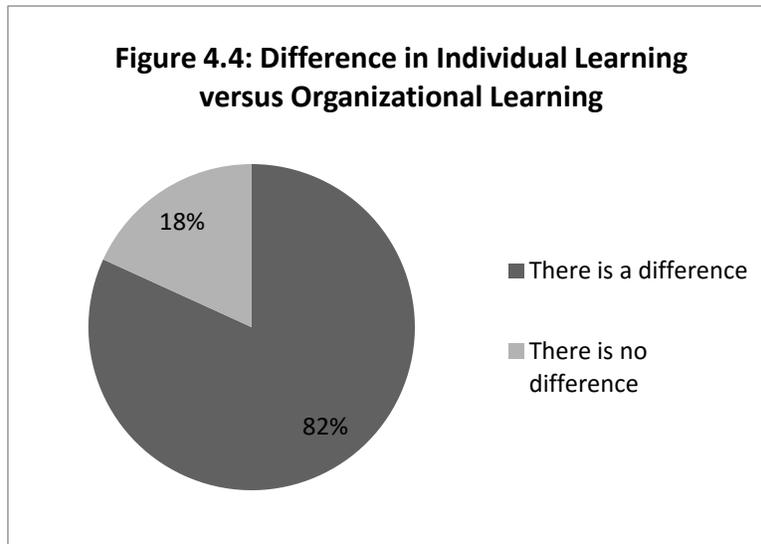
The respondents were asked to list the main factors that drive learning in their organization (Figure 4.3) and promotion was listed at sixty three percent (63%) personal development was twenty three percent (23%) and motivation was listed at fourteen percent (14%).



4.1.4 Individual Learning versus Organizational Learning

What is needed is to transform organizations into learning organizations in order to facilitate consistent learning in the organization. This can be achieved by creating a learning climate where the organization creates flatter, decentralized, more autonomous structures that encourage innovative thinking and creativity and knowledge sharing between and among individuals of the organization. The establishment of values and norms that support building a learning culture and improvements of leadership capacity to learn are all key components of a learning in organizations (Maden, 2011). Therefore, an individual's ability to learn in the workplace is dependent upon the organization's structure and practices to a certain extent and also on individual's ability to learn.

The respondents were asked if they thought there was a difference in individual learning as opposed to Organizational Learning (Figure 4.4) eighty two percent (82%) indicated that there was a difference, while eighteen percent (18%) said they found there was no difference.



4.1.5 Organization Embracing Changes and Innovation

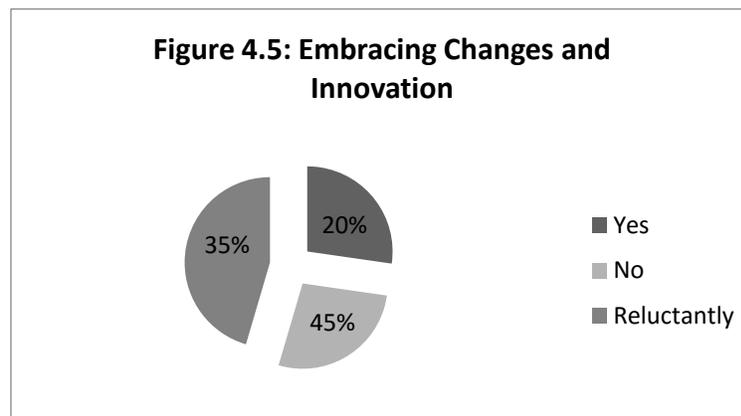
Individuals learn differently as compared to the organization itself. Knowledge is applied to individual when he/she is willing to accept what is taught. Here, most participants will agree that it is indeed true that they learn differently and time just accept what is suggested just because it is routine and not them willing to learn. About a certain number of people agree they learn differently through training. This issue brings focus to training as a major factor driving learning hence important within an organization.

Training is knowledge and skills already known by a particular person and is to be transferred to someone else like staffs within the organization. Proper learning and training will bring positive

change, with this lacking within the various organization, then it brings difficulty when embracing change.

The respondents were asked whether their organization embraced change and innovation.

Twenty percent (20%) indicated yes, forty five percent (45%) (Figure 4.5) indicated that they did not and thirty five percent (35%) indicated that their organizations did so reluctantly.



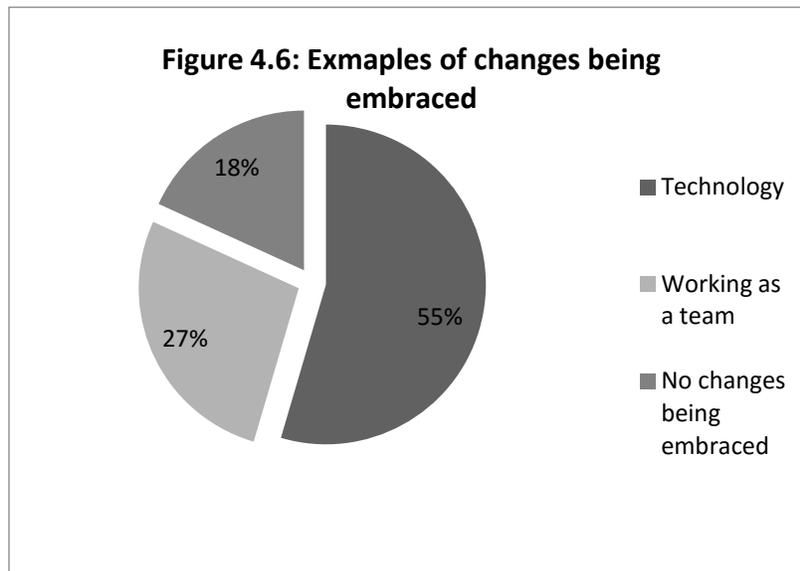
4.1.6 Examples of Change Being Embraced

To some individuals, result to the question on embracing change within the organization was that change happens. Participants thought that within their organization, expansion, and upgrade of technological resources brings change. Technology changes over a short period, therefore, organizations being familiar with new technological change or being up to date with new methods for daily business operations, will put them in a better performance position.

In other organizations there is work that continuously provides opportunity for additional knowledge and learning. Here there is rotation between jobs, teams are formed and engaged in collaborative problem solving. Workers are also encouraged to share ideas among themselves

and to develop their work. Even through the organization sets the learning environment the individual has to show an interest in wanting to learn.

The respondents were asked to list the changes they noticed being embraced and (Figure 4.6) fifty five percent (55%) noticed that technology was really being embraced; twenty seven (27%) indicated working as a team versus individually and eighteen percent (18%) indicated they noticed no changes being embraced.

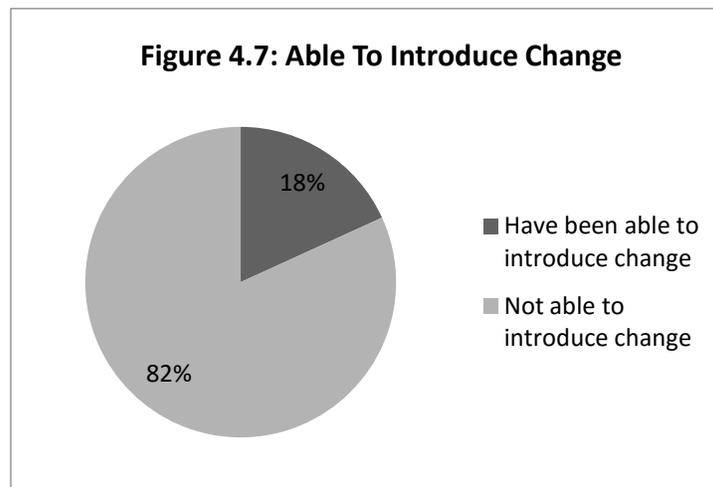


4.1.7 Being Able to Introduce Changes

A large percentage of participants said they have not been able to introduce change within the organizations they work. The reason behind this is that it is really difficult for any individual to work in an uncomfortable environment. If individuals are not free from the workplace, then it will not be easy for them or anyone to come up with new great building ideas because of fear. The other reason was, the leader installs progress in most organizations. The leader is the driver, without him embracing or allowing his subordinates make a change then everything does not run as required.

Some participants replied to have embraced change within their organizations. This was a small percentage, though, but it gave out clear information that actually as an individual within any organization can stand up, bring up an idea that will create change to an organization performance.

The respondents were asked if they were able to introduce any changes; (Figure 4.7) eighteen percent (18%) indicated that they were able to introduce change, while a resounding eighty two percent (82%) indicated that they were not able to introduce any change.

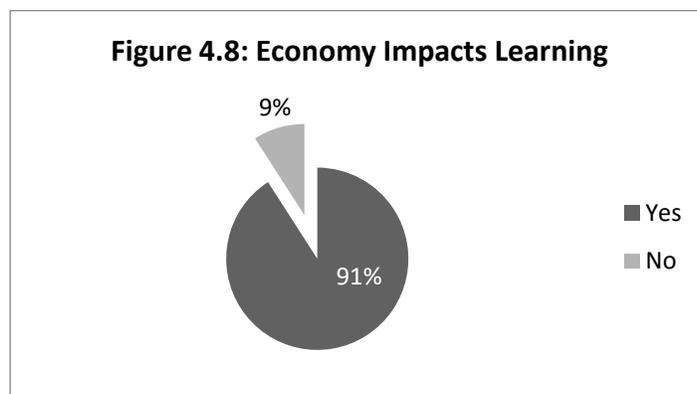


4.1.8 ECONOMY AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

Most of the respondents believe that the economy has largely impacted the way learning takes place. Since the resources are scarce, and certain organizations are not considered to be direct revenue earners, they have a difficult time obtaining the required resources for daily operations and staff training. Other respondents claim that the economy has not had an impact on a large scale on learning taking place within an organization. They claim that learning takes place according to the resources at their disposal. Lack of resources allows for inferior performance

since the tools have to be shared, which slows down the pace at which the service is offered. Not everyone is exposed to the different systems in the organization. Some systems are old and not up to date which slows down the service of the organization. It can be concluded that most people believe that economy impacts learning in an organization in that the more available the resources, the more the organization services will run efficiently.

The respondents were asked if the economy had an impact on the way learning takes place in the organization; (Figure 4.8) ninety one percent (91%) indicated that the economy had a great impact on the way learning took place, while nineteen percent (19%) stated that the economy had no impact on the manner learning took place in the organization. All of the respondents (100%) also stated that availability of the limited resources greatly limits operations.



Performance within a country falls when the economy is high making it difficult to purchase equipment's that can be used to drive profit generated work within organizations (Edmondson and Moingeon 1997).

Some respondents, however, did not mention the exact impact by stating that:

“...advancement of technology in the organization has to do more training of their workers who are willing to learn.”

One participant believed that the economy had had a large impact, he noted that

“...the economy impacted the way learning takes place. Resources are scarce, and certain organizations that are not considered to be direct revenue earners have a difficult time obtaining the required resources for daily operations of staff training.”

In addition to that, the following was added to that:

“...the economy has had an impact with regards to training; there is a scarcity of funds when people have opted to seek training on their own.”

Nonetheless, one respondent had a different experience, and noted that:

“...the economy has not had an impact on the way learning takes place in my organization. The resources were available to carry out operations promptly.”

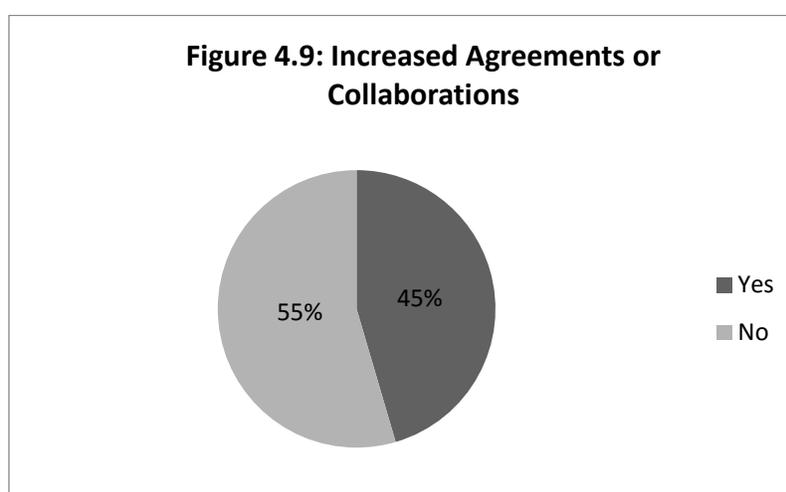
4.1.9 Have the Agreements and Collaboration with donor/development partners increased recently?

Collaborations with donors or other firms bring a huge impact to organizations. Donors will provide funds or equipment's that will later help in daily operations within an organization.

Responses from participants showed that recently collaborations with donors have not increased.

The reason behind this was not clearly stated but to the organizations that have an experience with donors collaborations, named some donors that played a major role. They named the country as China; and Agencies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Organization of United

States (OAS), Commonwealth Secretariat (CARICOM) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This brought a confirmation to the project research that hope is not lost among countries, people or other organizations who want to act as donors even though the rate at which collaboration is taking place is small. When asked if there was an increase in the agreements and collaboration with the donor/development partners, (Figure 4.9) forty five percent (45%) of the respondents stated that there was an increase in agreements and collaborations and fifty five percent (55%) indicated that there was no increase.

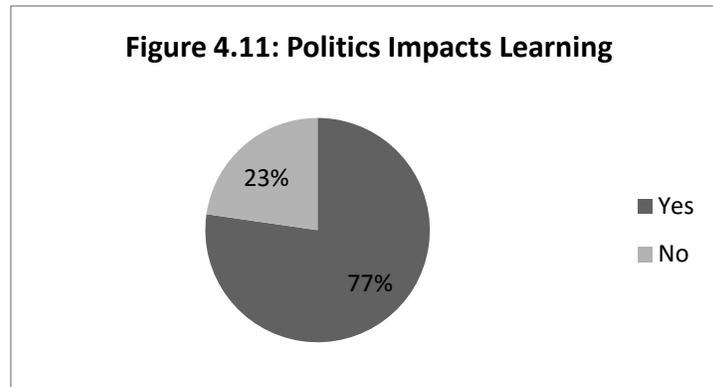


4.1. 10 How has the agreements and collaboration with donor development partners influence how and what organizations learn.

All of the respondents (100%) which make up a small sample size of the public sector indicate that they have seen a decline in training opportunities as a result of a decrease in agreements and collaborations.

4.1.11 Is Politics a Factor That impacts Learning in Organizations?

The respondents (Figure 4.11) (77%) have indicated that politics is a major factor that impacts learning in the organization, while twenty three percent (23%) are of the opinion that politics has no impact on learning in organizations.



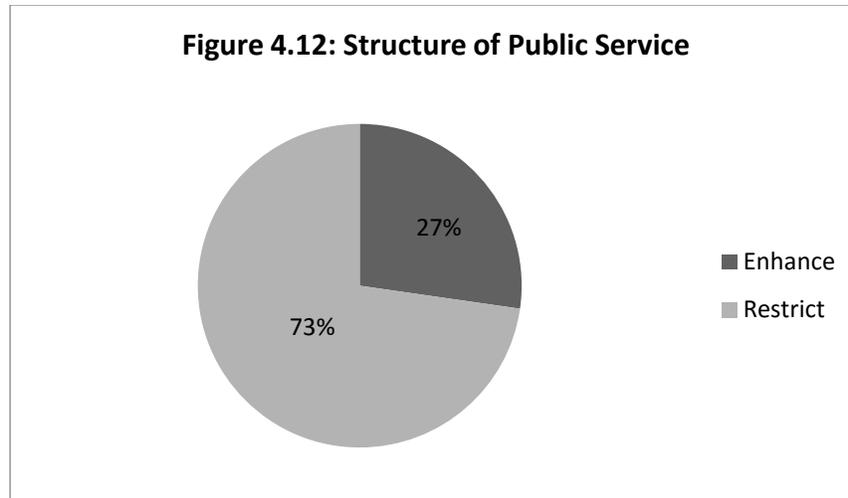
With the change of a Political Administration also comes change in the organization. Sometimes there is no continuity. Projects and Programs that would have been put in place to benefit the employees are been put on hold or discontinued because of different plans for the organization and at times goes against some employees in the organization. On the other hand with a new administration comes new and creative ideas that can have a positive impact on Organizational Learning. From experience there has been a number of training workshops and short courses afforded to employees with the coming in of new administrations.

4.1.12 Does the Public Service Structure enhance or restrict learning

Respondents had varying opinions when questioned about how the structure of the public service has affected organizational learning. Because the public service has become more technological based some of the respondents argued that it enhances learning since the public servants are learning more about networking, how to access information that they need more speedily and soon. Workshops and other educational programs are set aside for public service workers to attend.

Some of the respondents thought argued that the structure of the public service restrict learning to a certain extent because of the speed in which the service is embracing the information as it pertains to the technology. In addition to that, persons are not moved up based on their years /experience, but it is based on knowing persons in higher positions who help them climb the ladder. Persons also recommend their friends and close acquaintances to attend training seminars while some persons do not attend any training at all since they are left behind. This greatly restricts learning as per to the observations made by most of the respondents. With such kind of structure in public bodies, not all will be willing to bring their best into development but rather lose morale because at the end of the day their efforts are not seen or rewarded fairly (Jones & Thompson, 2007).

The respondents were asked if the Public Service structure enhanced or restricted learning. Seventy-three percent (73%) indicated that the structure that the structure enhances learning while twenty seven (27%) (Figure 4.12) are of the opinion that the current structure restricts learning.



According to some of the respondents:

“...the public sector restricts learning because some persons are pushed to the top quite often whether or not they have the qualifications or even the experience, the pay grade is different even though you have the qualifications and experience. These things I know will deter individuals in wanting to progress by learning new skills and technology.”

For several years, governments have shown little support for performance management strategies such as appraisals and instead focused on changing organizations’ structures and introducing new technology according to O’Donnell & Turner (2005). However, there have been some factors pushing governments in microstates to consider democratizing workplace procedures like promotions. Both citizens and donors have contributed to these accountability and performance changes (O’Donnell & Turner, 2005).

Another added that

“...training sessions are offered, but the knowledge is not transferred within the different ministries for better improvement.”

There is much learning that takes place in public organizations. However, due to bureaucracy and need to outshine each other, the sharing of knowledge does not occur. Nonetheless, citizen's demands for better service delivery and the changing global challenges have forced these institutions to adapt. For government agencies to improve delivery of service, some key strategies need to be implemented that will also benefit the government (Mannie, Van Niekerk, & Adendorff, 2013).

Other respondents did not share the views; they had the following to say:

“...the structure of the public sector enhances learning. It provides training to help individuals enhance and develop their knowledge understanding specifics to their scope of work and also opportunities to further studies to branch off into their field.”

“...opportunities are there for training and job rotations” according to the third respondent

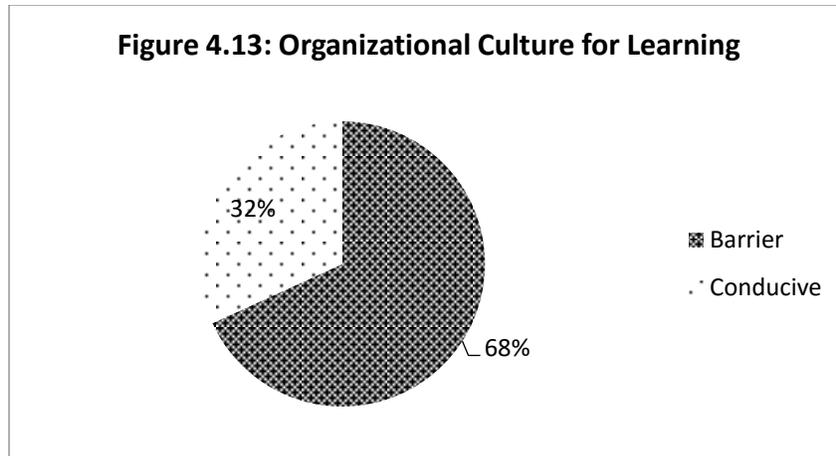
4.1.13 Is the Organizational Culture a Barrier of Conduit for Learning In Your Organization

Most respondents highly believe that organizational culture serves as a barrier to organizational learning. Some believe that in modern organizations which are open to change organizational culture can be a conduit while for those organizations which are established in their ways it can

be a barrier. Every organization is built on its culture. Culture is fundamental to shaping the attitude and willingness to learn and is therefore, viewed as a prerequisite of learning in an Organization. Organizational culture can be a barrier or conduit for learning (Gilley & Gilley, 2000). The result was that culture was mainly an obstacle for learning. Some organizations are built in a culture of not socializing but rather focus on their individual work. This bad culture negatively affects the daily operations within an organization. Unity develops strength; individuals should work together to learn as noted by Chawla and Renesch (1995).

Every organization is built on its culture. The result was that culture was mainly an obstacle for learning. Some organizations are built in a culture of not socializing but rather focus on their individual work. This bad culture negatively affects the daily operations within an organization. The respondents had the following to say about the effect of culture:

“...in my organization, culture is a big barrier to learning.” The same sentiments were shared by the first respondent while some believed that culture was a conduit for learning in the organization. When asked if the organizational culture was a barrier or a conduit for learning in the organization, (Figure 4.13) sixty eight percent (68%) of the respondents said that the culture was a barrier to learning and thirty two percent (32%) said that the culture was conducive to learning.



Different participants had different opinions on what should be done to enhance or create a learning environment. The following were the results and views of the question.

“...Replace head of the departments with a competent leader.”

Change the organizational culture and make a friendly environment. A respondent notes that

“...there seems to be more networking among colleagues to solve issues that affect the”

Create a learning environment through teamwork

Individual’s willingness to pass on information and follow factors.

“...frequent training” as noted by another respondent.

Regular technology updates. One respondent talks of *“...the use of computerized TR3 payment”*

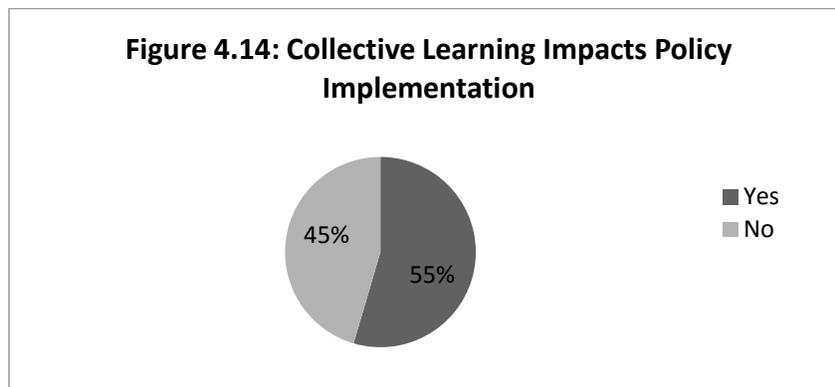
as one of the major changes he has noticed in his organization.

4.1.14 Does Collective Learning Impact Policy Implementation?

Some of the responses from the respondents show that collective learning impacts on policy implementation in that when a group understands the goals of an organization as they learn, they can be more knowledgeable and better informed to implement policies that would be beneficial.

Learning does not only operate on the individual learning level and as such (Cook & Yanow, 1993) expand on the cognitive and knowledge perspective by arguing that the environment in an organization is a collective learning environment.

The respondents were asked of collective learning impacted policy implementation, (Figure 4.14) fifty five percent(55%) agreed that it did, while forty five percent (45%) indicated that it did not.



Through collective learning, each and everyone will be able to share his or her ideas and as a result, the policy would be done effectively. Increased knowledge, especially in collective learning, provides greater impetus and impact on policy implementation.

4.1. 15 What Can Be Done to Enhance or Create a Learning Environment In Your Organization?

Most respondents came up with different views and ideas on how to create or enhance a learning environment within an organization. Some of the opinions included replacing the head of departments within an organization with competent leaders and someone who is a team player. Enhancement of the accountability system is also thought to help in one way or the other. More collaboration and cohesion between members of the organization should be built. Development of a culture of purposeful learning and appreciation for learning will result in a change for the better. Encouragement and facilitation of activities that will make everyone comfortable to learn. The organizations should also promote incentives at the end of the year for their employees who performed well throughout the year whether by performance, attendance or overall mannerism when dealing with clients. Creation of local, regional and international training programs will also help a big deal in enhancing a learning environment.

Ensuring rotation at work is also highly encouraged as a way of creating and enhancing the learning environment. Maintaining healthy relationships between employers and employees is also encouraged. All of the respondents (100%) agreed that Management play a vital role in motivating individuals within organizations to learn and also to provide the learning environment.

Based on research questions, the number of individuals agreeing on organizational learning can be practiced approximately 99%. This is from the questionnaires perspective, how individuals respond to questions. To get better results within organizations, public sector, countries and

positive impact on the economy, managers must adopt new learning methods and not simply train individuals within the same situation; the environment should be welcoming to all.

Individuals should adopt the new learning methods, change bad organizational structure and practice teamwork. Once a company has adapted to a new environment, it is no longer the organization it used to be; it has evolved. That is the essence of learning, (Arie De Geus, Harvard business Review, 1993).

4.2 DISCUSSION

This chapter will focus on thoughts, reviews, and evaluation based on the research work. Much work is needed to provide a better understanding of what microstates are and how they learn within an organizational context. Several strategies are to be put forward within organizations.

Research objectives were to understand the definition of organizational learning within microstates, to have an understanding of different theories of organizational learning, to be familiar with limitations of the theories, to understand the economy in microstates, to have a clear vision of what needs to change within organizations and to understand problems faced by agencies in the public sector.

Different researchers and scholars have come up with a definition of the term organizational learning. Despite them talking much about organizational learning no one has put forward the various microstates to practice this although most researchers focus on one country. Scholars put some misunderstanding towards how this new culture should be practiced within organization simply because of using difficult terminologies to describe it. Simple definitions of concepts related to organizational learning make it easy for individuals and managers to understand what is required (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011).

Microstates within years have not been able to withstand economic pressure. Microstates face lots of challenge that need to be tackled and changes made on its daily performance. Such states have not been able to withstand economic pressure due to limited resources which are inactive and less innovative, unlike developed large states that can withstand economic changes (Garud & Karnøe, 2001).

Microstates should focus on organizational learning within its organizational context since learning within its context brings up understanding on their weakness, strengths, and areas to improve performance instead of relying on external factors at all times. Strategies should be put in place to respond to electric external shock and changes in the global environment. Public sectors within microstates should learn and aim at improving its performance over a period. A clear concept should be established to show how microstates should practice organizational learning. Never should we compare microstates to large states (Organizational learning and knowledge, 2012).

4.2.1 Differences Between Micro and Large States Concerning the Research

Microstates are yet to overcome their constraints and develop and learn from their daily performances while large states have more formalized structures and cultures and are self-driven.

Microstates seem to have a high population rate, while the birth rate in large states is much lower as they tend to be concerned with social and economic development. Studies show that in macro states the people's living standard is believed to be high while in microstates, the standard of living is moderate/ low because of poverty.

In microstates, the literacy rate is low while in macro states, the literacy rate is high. Education therefore, is the key to providing new ideas and innovations within any organization.

Microstates tend to lack resources needed to perform day-to-day operations while large states seldom encounter this problem, hence their activities run smoothly resulting in better performances. The limited resources in microstates however, are not utilized optimally. If microstates engage in optimal usage of their resources, this would foster organizational development then it brings a great impact on its economy.

4.2.2 Why Organizational Learning

Over the past, organizations have been relying on external sources to learn. However, since some researchers like Peter Senge brought a precise definition of what organizational learning was and the benefits, most organizations have begun practicing this culture. According to Peter Senge (1990) description of organizational learning; "this is a place whereby people entirely dedicate themselves to pushing their maximum potentials to produce their truly desired results, where virgin ideas and profound thinking are nurtured; where the zeal of a common goal are pursued by incorporation of different entities of far-fetched and in-depth ideas."

Learning is acquiring knowledge and skills from teamwork that brings a shared vision and the surrounding environment. A learning organization is an organization in which different skills are being created, acquired and also knowledge transferred to transform it hence giving the organization a reflection of new knowledge and insight (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1997). Organizational learning is defined differently by different scholars, but the aim of this in microstates is believed to bring change in its performance

For decades, Organizations have always relied much on academics concept of an organization rather than group performance. The development of Small States has been negatively hindered by some problems; such problems in agreement with the review are characterized by isolation (islands), limited resources and a small number of people. Organization learning is a revolutionary culture that should be embraced in microstates for them to have a competitive with large states. Survival of an organization depends on their ability to adapt, embrace changes and learn (Organizational learning and knowledge, 2012).

To some scholar's theory, organizational learning is through acquisition and distribution of knowledge. The statement is true in a sense that learning needs to be absorbed by an individual, in the process of acquiring knowledge. Focus is on public sector compared to the private sector in this research. Some scholars propose that organizational forces that occur in the external environment trigger learning.

It is evident from research that indeed external forces push an organization to learn (Dierkes, 2001). Most organizations within microstates do not rely on internal factors, not that they do not see but rather most are not aware of such factors as Dierkes (2001) notes. External forces include increased competitiveness within large countries and daily change of consumer demands.

External factors are factors to focus on but in the case of the questions, it mainly focuses on how organizations can learn within themselves.

According to March and Olson (1976), learning is experiential where individual beliefs, preferences and its attitude contribute to learning within the organization. The research agrees on this, a person with a bad attitude towards his/her work area will not be able to learn hence any change will be brought in the organization. Experience is the best teacher; individuals need to experience to learn within an organization (Revans, 2011).

Definition of the public sector from various approaches about this area of research shows that organizational learning in this sector is distinct from those of private sector. Different researchers have come up with different approaches; some researchers focused on public sector and its civil service including Barettea et al. (2012). The scholars concentrated on the value of organizational learning to the process of renewal of public service organization in Canada. Although the researchers focused on one country, they outlined that under strict rules, the public sector can acquire more knowledge.

Public sector over the years has been known to have complex channels of communication. These structures have caused the sector to have poor performance, as the employees shy away from proposing new ideas to their seniors to boost microstates' economy (Jones & Thompson, 2007).

Mathew Ryan and Williams (2010) examined the Australian public sector. Their focus was on managers, to them managers should contribute to the learning process. They found that Managers lead within an organization, and they should be an example. With unfriendly strict and unapproachable managers then learning cannot be practiced within organizations. However good

their research was, it did not add strength or rather focus on individuals and their role in adapting process of organizational learning as individuals make up an organization.

Several scholars focused on public sectors like Pokharel and Hult (2010) who concentrate on the United States. Their answer to the big question under this research on organization learning is influenced by various external and internal factors. Organization competitiveness depends on the ability to learn, adapt and change (Al-Hakim & Jin, n.d.).

The private sector's learning experience dominates the literature on organization learning. Why this area? The reason behind this is because of how developed the sector is and its provision of quality service. Private organizations are up to date with new technological changes, consumer demands, competition and global change. Organization culture in this sector acts as a motivation to its environment (Prafka, 2000). Patnaik et al. (2013) focused on how culture influences organizational learning. Culture, to many shapes attitude and willingness to learn. Organizations learn in two basic; internal experience and external experience. Limitation of their research was that they focused on culture taking place with diverse Indian education system.

Exploration of public service organizations provides a wider range of organizational contexts within which to develop understanding of knowledge creation and learning, and can help to illuminate features of the private sector. Of course, there are wide variations in the context and processes both within and across the public and private sectors, such that 'publicness' should perhaps be seen as a dimension not a dichotomy (Bozeman and Bretschneider 1994) but on the other hand, there can be differences in goals, purposes, structures and stakeholders for example, which render the public service context noteworthy.

Both private and public sectors have had to respond to periods of rapid change to meet customer or citizen demands, but government policies and pressures for performance are a significant catalyst for change in the public sector, compared with market-driven pressures for knowledge to develop new products and services in the private sector (Hartley and Benington 2006; Kelman 2005).

In contrast to the private sector, where the relationship between knowledge absorption and its advantage to 'the organization' is well established, government policy initiatives for the reform of public organizations have largely failed to promote knowledge creation. The UK Government's drive for the 'modernization' and improvement in public services has resulted in a plethora of research around performance, assessment and improvement (Gray et al. 2005; Martin 2005).

In addition, the motivations, purpose, barriers, opportunities, mechanisms and outcomes of organizational learning and inter-organizational learning are likely to differ between sectors. The deliberate acquisition and leverage of knowledge assets from external sources is an established, entrepreneurial activity in the private sector (Child and Faulkner 1998; Kim 1998), whereas knowledge creation in public organizations is more likely to be a factor of policy implementation, rather than an explicit goal (Bate and Robert 2002). External policy drivers of public service reform tend to drive the sharing of knowledge between organizations, to drive up 'industry' standards and performance, rather than protect knowledge and generate commercial or competitive advantage for individual organizations.

The commercial value of organizational learning and knowledge to scholars and business strategists in private sector organizations is well established as critical to long-term business success (Child and Faulkner 1998; Dixon 2000; Easterby-Smith et al. 1999; Nonaka and

Takeuchi 1995). Managing knowledge is ‘arguably the single most important challenge being faced by many kinds of organizations across both the private and the public sectors’ (Newell et al. 2002:2). In contrast to private organizations, the argument why organizational learning is critical to success in public sector organizations is under-developed (Finger and Brand 1999; Nutley and Davies 2001), as is the contribution to the field of research into public organizations

Rivera, Hernáez and Bueno Campos (2011) believed an organization’s actions and interactions from which there is a creation of knowledge between individuals and agencies are the things that define it. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) set out the position of people in an organization. The focus was middle up down model. In their model, managers and team, leaders are key to facilitate knowledge. As we know, in every organization, change begins with the leaders. The research had a limitation, in that it focused on private sector organization in developed countries and not much in developing countries or even this area of the investigation of microstates.

Yeo (2003) research focused on how organization learning can become a source of organization performance and competitiveness. He stated that learning occurs on three levels within organizations: individual, team, organization itself. Organization is made up of individuals; these individuals have to work as a team to make great performance within its organization. However, his research was focused on Singapore; a developed economically despite it being micro-sized.

Whitbeck(2014) talks about creating a learning environment; Public sector organizations should be transformed into learning organizations to assist in facilitating consistent learning. If anyone can set up and manage new knowledge in the public sector, then s/he can lead an improved and

sustainable performance. His research limitation was that he focused on collective learning other than an individual or organizational learning.

Senge (1990) brought a clear understanding of organizational learning. With the discussions above on theories of research on organizational learning it is mainly noted that learning within organizations is real, and to achieve these organizations should stop focusing on external factors alone but rather internal factors too. Learning starts with an individual; a friendly environment is welcoming to new ideas and self-driven spirit to achieve better results. When the economy is bad, then it affects not only the country/state but its individual and organization too. To avoid this, organizations within microstates should practice learning from the past within their organizations.

Klieger (2012) notes microstates have certain characteristics that negatively affect their development. However, the culture should not be an excuse since anyone can turn the negative tradition into a challenge and make learning success writes Pettit, Roper, and Eade (2003). Organizations should wake up, accept their weaknesses, country, and all its challenges to progress. They should practice teamwork; individuals should be willing to learn from mistakes or that of others and pick up the broken pieces to make something new. The public sector can change its provision of service (Al-Bastaki, 2014).

Research can be done over and over; discussions put in place but without organizations willingness to learn then all this is of no help. Survival of organizations depends on their ability to adapt and grow (McLean, 2006).

4.2.3 Similarities of literature review from scholars to this research paper

Though scholars within this field of study differed on a definitive explanation of organizational learning, certain similarities were evident. The scholars agree that organizational learning within the microstate is affected by internal and external factors, when these factors are effectively addressed it becomes a source of organization competitiveness. They also agree that individuals make up an organization and need to practice teamwork to learn. Without the willingness to learn then organizational learning cannot be achieved as organizational learning drives organization success and competitiveness.

The scholars also concur that the public sector does not pay close attention to internal learning and the lack of resources within public sector hinders quality service. It was agreed that the corporate culture within microstates can be a barrier to learning, hence, to transform the public sector into learning organization it has to first change the learning environment.

4.2.4 LIMITATIONS

Most research focused on the private sector. Focus was on one country and culture. Some focused on organizations itself other than individual learning that brings organization learning. It was not stated clearly what impact organizational learning could make in the economy. Scant or no attention concentrated on political and economic factors that directly or indirectly affect public sector. Microstates way of learning did not clearly define the process apart from discussions about teamwork.

4.2.5 Results Review

Surveys, questionnaires were useful methods in understanding what individuals thought on organizational learning. Observation method assisted in confirming individual's behavior within organizations. Research methodologies were an excellent help in understanding more of the real issues as compared to those found in the case study and library research.

After questioning several participants within organizations, the results confirmed most organizations are yet to embrace learning. Some evidence to show that learning has occurred should reflect on the improved performance of the organization.

The research results show individuals are familiar with the term, but strategies need to be put in place to facilitate organizational learning. Organizational learning within organizations can trace through members working in a free environment so as to bring up new ideas, change of individual's behavior and performance improvement. Changing head of departments will play a significant role in individuals although learning is a willingness from the heart and mind, as much as the leader or manager changes because if a person shows no interest in learning, then nothing will improve.

On familiarity with the term Organizational learning the respondents had the following to say

"...it is the way knowledge is retained and transferred amongst employees within an organization."

Although the respondent had initially answered that he had no idea what organization learning was. Another respondent added that:

“...acquiring and transferring knowledge by members of an organization to help to grow and achieve its (organization) missions and goals while enhancing personal development.”

Same sentiments were shared in defining the process as

“...a system whereby knowledge procedure and practice of an organization is transferred to another employee and retained in memory.”

While the one included the creation process

...a process of creating, retaining and transferring knowledge happens within an organization

These factors were similar to all questions answered, therefore, indicates that employees are satisfied when they can learn on a daily basis. The respondents shared the same reasons; they all agreed that promotion had a significant role to play. Another mentioned

“...reward system.”

“...environmental climate.”

“...structure of the work.”

“...leadership style.”

His views on a reward system were shared by the another respondent who highlighted

“...motivation”

“...training” and

“...reward incentives.”

While some respondent talked of *work experience* as a major driving factor

Learning takes time within organizations. After all, Rome was not built in a day. Therefore, it takes time for the organization to learn and embrace changes. Change normally takes time as to see improvements within organizations.

There are still many questions on the topic “organizational learning in microstates” according to Garvin (2000): how will an organization realize that it has become a learning organization? What practices should be done after an organization has learned? Also, what should be borrowed from the private sector?

There are no tool or any equipment that can be used in confirming that an organization is learning (Dixon 1999). However, she adds that through carrying out different methods of research investigations like questionnaires after a given period, the organization can be able to determine whether structures have been put in place to facilitate the process or whether the organization is saving revenue after embracing learning.

Edmondson (2012) points out that there are different ways an organization can learn and there are also ways the process can be facilitated. He states that organization must be willing to learn from past experiences, must solve problems in a systematic manner and accept failure as a challenge to lead to improvement. Edmondson further state that organizations must strive to increase their resources, update their technological resources and change any unproductive existing environment. He is convinced that to be successful organizations must not be afraid to experiment with new ideas and approaches, share knowledge among individuals, teams and

finally the organization should change public sector organizational structure to a more favorable structure and practice benchmarking

4.2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

This is the general quantitative and qualitative analysis of how the research was conducted and/or findings from the participants. Results play a big role in the project simply because it gives a clear picture of what individuals within organizations thought should be done or changed.

The results of participation and response rate according to the research were as below:

Method	No. of participant	Questions given	Questions answered	No. of participant answered	Participant rate (%).	Response rate (%).
Self-administered questions	26	15 each	15	26	26/26 * 100= 100	15/15 * 100= 100
Delivery method questions	26	15	15	22	26/26 * 100= 100	15/15 * 100= 100

5.0 CONCLUSION

Organizational learning is a concept in practice in most organizations. Organizational learning came to be understood clearly, when an author, Peter Senge explained in details what it was in his book *The Fifth Discipline* (1990). His book was an eye opener to most managers on how to carry out and practice learning organization or simply organizational learning.

To be able to achieve organizational learning, there is a need of first achieving individual learning (Dixon, 1999). Individual learning is quite different from organizational learning, but the two complement each other. Individual learning can be achieved in two ways: formal and informal learning. Formal learning is that which is acquired from classrooms while informal learning is that which one learns from experience at their surroundings (Manuti, Pastore, Scardigno, Giancaspro, & Morciano, 2015).

The need for individual learning within organizations is because organizations themselves are made up of people, the individuals. Despite all the theories found from the past to date on organizational learning, organizational learning is seen as not able to work independently without individuals. Individuals should first have the willingness to learn then acquire knowledge and skill to make learning success (Al-Hakim & Jin, n.d.).

In most organizations as seen while undertaking this research, managers and staffs practice informal learning (Mumford, Gold, & Mumford, 2004). The scholars add that the department's leaders should create a free environment for this learning to progress. Individual learning is the mother of organizational learning. Without proper training of individuals then we cannot achieve learning within organizations. Some plans or strategies should be put in place in most

organizations to change its culture. The strategies may include self-motivation, job rotations, teamwork, and managers interaction with everyone equally (Grobler, 2009).

Individuals should be willing to learn from experiences then make change within the organization. The strategies were lacking in most organizations. According to Argyris and Schon theory, organization learning takes place through individuals whose actions are based on a set of shared model. The individual organization is the key to a bright growing country (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Organizational learning is defined as the process of acquiring knowledge within an organization. After individuals learn, then the organization can grow. How an organization learns is seen through its performance and individual's behavior change (Dixon, 1999). Much has been said about organizational learning by different authors. This method is seen to be the best in bringing change within organizations in small countries. Several strategies need to be in place for organizational learning to occur.

Organizational learning strategies according to Grobler (2009)

Managers' meetings with his employees – managers act as the head in any organization. With them freely meeting with their subordinates counts in the learning process. Managers can freely talk about challenges, lessons, and ideas with the individuals. Asking questions from both parties will help in understanding lessons to learn within the organization.

Set priorities – both parties should know what should come first. Understanding this will assist in focusing the most relevant facts on organizations.

Team spirit – individuals should have a mind of sharing new ideas and experiences to learn.

Allow mistakes – managers should allow others make mistakes. We learn through mistakes, and no one is perfect. Once an individual makes a mistake and wisely corrected then, he/she learns.

Use of technology – in the 21st-century technology has tremendously grown. Organizations should learn on how to acquire or be up to date with new technology to improve performance.

Motivation – motivate each other to do better every day. Motivating each other changes organization culture; Individuals will learn when motivated to do more every day.

Job rotations – managers should change their employee's position in their usual departments to other departments within the company for them learn.

The study was done to help understanding how micro organizations can learn within its organizational context. For this to happen, the change should take place within organizations.

Delivery of service within an organization and mostly improve performance are the major changes to put in place. To effectively achieve this, implement different strategies as explained previously by the research. One can prove that indeed the organization is learning if previous mistakes are not repeated within its organization.

The theoretical explanations on this study opened up ideas to put in place to learn. Therefore for any organization to learn, they can revisit the theories for more ideas. Clearly, one of the most significant issue to consider for most researchers is the organizational focus on teamwork, individual learning and finally organizational learning. Before an organization learns individual should be willing to acquire knowledge and skills.

It is interesting to note that, learning starts with an individual's willingness to gain knowledge. Microstates can turn their disadvantages or simply what they lack into a challenge to keep them going or as a learning lesson. As much as microstates organization face problems with their

economy, they can try merging their public sector organizations with the private sector or have non-governmental investors who will bring new, building ideas to help cope with every change taking place in the world.

Finally, what we can learn from the study is that organizational learning is a new concept that highly changes operations within an organization (Ho, 2014). Every company should practice this concept. They should not always depend on the national government for new ideas for those in the public sector. The managers and individuals can come with a plan on how to help them in future. In the case of demand for money or supply of resources within the organization, the micro organizations can ask help from donors. Partnership with donors brings more of advantages to the organization. The willingness of Micro organizations to learn within their organizational context is a choice. The decision should not be something they are forced to practice. The choice begins with them accepting the idea of organizational learning, and then change its organization structure and culture before individuals start to learn. Organization leaders need to foster teamwork and other forms of learning. Change starts with the leaders before their subordinates

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Appendix A



University Ethics Sub-Committee for Media and Communication
and School of Management

09/02/2016

Ethics Reference: 3842-jrg17-schoolofmanagement

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Rosa Greenaway

Department: Labour Market Studies

Research Project Title: How do organizations in Micro States learn within an organizational context within the Public Sector

Module Name or Course: Module 4 Research Methods LM7503

Supervisor's or Module Leader's Name: Doris Eikhof

Dear Rosa Greenaway,

RE: Ethics review of Research Study application

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for Media and Communication and School of Management has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1. Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2. Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

Dear Rosa,

Thank you for your amendments. I am overall happy to approve the application but do have two conditions:

(1) all Consent Forms and Participant Information Sheets you use must have your full contact details (i.e. telephone number and email) on them

(2) you mention contact points in departments handing out the survey. That is NOT permissible. Any contact between the participants and you must be solely through yourself so that no third party is aware who has participated in your research.

I wish you the best of luck with your project.

Dr Doris Ruth Eikhof, Research Ethics Officer

3. General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4. Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5. Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Natasha Whiteman

Appendix B

Participant Informed Letter

Liberta Village

St. Paul's Parish

Antigua

Telephone No. 1-268-7648347

janis-rosa@hotmail.com

1st December, 2015

Dear.....

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this research on "How do organizations in Micro States learn within an organizational context within the Public Sector?" I greatly appreciate you giving of your time in order to help me in my studies. I am undertaking this project as a part of an MSc degree which I am studying with the University of Leicester. The project I am working on is to address how organizational learning contributes to the performance in public sector organizations in small islands states. The research will attempt to meet the following objectives: (1) investigate the factors that facilitate organizational learning and knowledge in public sector organizations in microstates and small economies; (2) compare the facilitators of public sector organizational learning to facilitators in the private sector; and (3) examine how differences in facilitators affect organizational learning in public sector organizations and their responsive to change.

You were selected to take part in this research because of your years of service and your knowledge of the public sector. You can withdraw from the study at any time if you feel that it is necessary. If you are happy to take part in the research, however, I will ask you to sign a consent form giving your agreement. You can still withdraw from the research after signing the form. The questionnaire will consist of fifteen self explanatory questions based on my research topic. I would like to reassure you that the information which you provide on the questionnaire will be treated in the strictest of confidence. All data collected will be treated in accordance the principles of the Data Protection Act. In addition, your answers will be unattributed to either yourself or to any organisation which you work for or have worked for. The data gathered from the questionnaire will only be used for my MSc dissertation. Your own data will be completely anonymous and you will not be identifiable. Once again, thank you very much for your participation. If you have any questions at any stage of the project please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Respectfully

.....

Rosa Greenaway

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

"How do organizations in Micro States learn within an organizational context within the Public Sector

I agree to take part in the process of completing a questionnaire as part of the above named project. The research has been clearly explained to me and I have read and understood the participant informed consent letter. I understand that by signing the consent form I am agreeing to participate in this research and that I can withdraw from the research at any time. I understand that any information I provide during the interview is confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than the research project outlined above and that the data will not be shared with any other organizations.

Name:

Signature:..... Date:

9. Have agreements and collaboration with donor/development partners increased recently?

10. In your opinion how has this influenced what your organization has to learn and how it learns?

11. Is politics a factor that impacts on learning in your organization?

12. Do you think that the structure of the public service enhances or restricts learning? How so?

13. Is the organizational culture a barrier or a conduit for learning in your organization?

14. Do you think that collective learning impacts on policy implementation?

15. What do you think can be done to enhance or create a learning environment in your organization?