

**MULTI-LAYERED KNOWLEDGE DIFFUSION IN THE ADVANCING OF  
ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIVENESS IN MONEY DEPOSIT BANKS IN RIVERS STATE**  
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**ABSTRACT**

*This work examined the relationship between multi-layered knowledge diffusion and organizational responsiveness in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State. Objective of the study was to examine how multi-layered knowledge diffusion relates with measures of organizational responsiveness such as managerial flexibility and dialogue. The targeted population of the study consisted of twenty (20) Deposit Money Banks operating Rivers State, Nigeria. The entire population (20 Deposit Money Banks) was used without sampling since the population was considered to be small. Thus, five (5) top managers (General Manager, Operations Manager, Human Resource Manager, Customer Relations Manager, and Information Technology Manager) were selected in the state headquarters of each of the banks in Rivers State as the sample size of the study. Structured questionnaire was used to obtain primary data after due validation, and ascertaining the reliability of the instrument at 0.74 using Crombach alpha. The researcher was able to retrieve 95 copies of the distributed questionnaire. SPSS Version 20.0 was used to run the analysis. Spearman Rank Order was used for the Bivariate analysis. The findings of the study revealed that multi-layered knowledge diffusion has a strong positive relationship with managerial flexibility in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State, and that; multi-layered knowledge diffusion has a strong positive relationship with dialogue in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State. The study concluded that multi-layered knowledge diffusion is a tool with which organizations such as money deposit banks can utilize to advance their responsiveness in terms of managerial flexibility and dialogue, among others. Amongst others, the study recommended that management should critically analyze every innovative idea before acceptance and adoption are carried, so as to avoid situations that will deter them from being responsive when they really need to be, especially in terms of managerial flexibility and dialogue.*

***Keywords: multi-layered knowledge diffusion, organizational responsiveness, managerial flexibility, dialogue.***

**INTRODUCTION**

Companies that wish to achieve competitive advantage must take into account a new paradigm, that of responsiveness (Sommer, 2013), which emerges as an indispensable requirement for their survival in the twenty-first century (Hitt et al., 2016; Sanchez, 2015). Organizational responsiveness is the main capability that enables companies to face environmental fluctuations, as it makes the organization more responsive to change. The literature on organizational change considers flexibility to be one of the dynamic capabilities through which firms confront change (Wright and Snell, 2011; Zajac et al., 2010). The organizations most sensitive to changes in the environment have a strategic organizational capability that enables them to change easily and thus to continue to maintain acceptable results without incurring high reorganization costs. In this way, organizational responsiveness is based on the concept of flexibility. Organizational responsiveness in the broad sense includes different kinds of flexibility, among which we would stress managerial flexibility and dialogue as organizational tasks to achieving responsiveness in the course of their survival.

Flexibility is a broad concept that can be related to many elements in an organization (operations, marketing, human resources, structure, strategy, etc.). Managerial flexibility, according to Great (2018), refers to the ability of the management of a company or fund to make investment decisions and other decisions based on current or projected market conditions, as opposed to any preconceived notions. According to Volberda (2012), organizational flexibility is the outcome of an

interaction between the responsiveness of the organization (organization design task) and the managerial capabilities (managerial task). These two sets of variables express the paradox of flexibility. As a managerial task, flexibility is considered a dynamic capability, which is manifested by a hierarchy of capabilities: operational, structural and strategic (Ansoff & Brandenburg, 2015).

Another measure of organizational responsiveness is dialogue. An organization that is responsive is one that allows for dialogue, among other things. In other words, an organization such as a money deposit bank cannot claim to be responsive when it does not give way for dialogue. Dialogue is one of the tools through which organizations can accept and adopt new ideas that will bring the needed change(s). According to Bakhtin (2014), dialogue is a power of discourse to increase understanding of multiple perspectives and create myriad possibilities. According to Robust (1963), dialogue alters the psychology of a group. The definition puts light on the fact that dialogue creates a new understanding among individuals leading to better interpersonal relationships. A dialogue in a group of people can help them talk together in order to explore their diverse options or ideas about an issue. This implies that dialogue in an organization can open the door to innovations. This therefore implies that there are forces that can influence the way organizations practice responsiveness. One of them as deemed worthy by this study is multilayered knowledge diffusion.

Knowledge is power. This phrase is often heard in organisations today, and it is the main reason for not sharing knowledge. Thus, a crucial question for not sharing this knowledge would seem to be: "Is the knowledge equation a zero-sum game or can the sharing of knowledge result in mutual benefits for both individuals and organizations?" The process of intra-organisational diffusion of innovation has been investigated from various research perspectives such Technology and Innovation Management (TIM), strategy, marketing, organisational behaviour and sociology. Each one of these approaches explains the process of knowledge diffusion in reference to how it is. Ozei (2012) refers to knowledge diffusion as the scientific process of disseminating knowledge. This diffusion of knowledge takes place between individuals or groups and organizations for communication of research and innovations in society. According to Chen et al. (2014), "Knowledge diffusion can be defined as the adaptations and applications of knowledge documented in scientific publications and patents". multi-layered knowledge transfer is defined by Aerts et al. (2016) as the scientific means of knowledge within an organizational setting, where it can it can take place horizontally or vertically. Horizontal knowledge diffusion is when the knowledge is transferred from the management to the employees. Vertical knowledge diffusion is when the knowledge transfer takes place among managers or among employees (especially those of the same department). An organization that enjoys seamless diffusion of knowledge/innovations that later imparts positively on their productivity, profitability, etc. will easily find the need to be responsive, as this will give way for more innovative ideas to spread quickly. Jude (2019) averred that responsive organisation are designed to learn and react quickly through the open flow of information, to promote experimentation and learning in rapid cycles and to organise themselves as a network of employees, customers and partners motivated by common goals. On the flipside, observing that allowing for adoption of newly introduced innovation over time yields negative result deters an organization from being responsive in a subsequent time.

However, money deposit banks in Nigeria and Rivers State particularly are yet to handle newly introduced ideas or innovations the proper way. Some of them do not communicate appropriately as they should. Heads of Departments or Supervisors are not properly communicated, and this poor communication will later affect the entire league of employees, which will birth poor result. This might translate to management's lackadaisical attitude towards subsequent suggestion of an innovative idea. Jacob (2013) stated that a lot of money deposit banks in Rivers State are yet to adopt sophisticated ways of knowledge capturing, analysis and diffusion for proper organizational utilization, and this is preventing a lot of them from being flexible, since their wrong approach to innovation diffusion has been producing bad results. This is worrisome and requires urgent attention.

Another pressing issue that provoked this research effort is the absence or lack of sufficient literature that bother on the relationship between multi-layered knowledge diffusion and organizational responsiveness. To support this claim, Różewski and Jankowsk (2015) did a study on model of multilayer knowledge diffusion for competence development in an organization. Urbancová and Fejfarová (2015) carried out a study on vertical knowledge transfer in Czech organizations. Also, Zhou et al. (2020) studied integrated framework of horizontal and vertical cross-project knowledge transfer mechanism within project-based organizations. Additionally, Byosiere (2010) did a study on diffusion of organisational innovation: knowledge transfer through social networks. It is obvious at this point that research on the relationship between multi-layered knowledge diffusion and organizational responsiveness in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State is yet to gather sufficient or get a research effort. Upon these conditions, the researcher finds it very interesting to carry a study to check on the relationship that exists between multi-layered knowledge diffusion and organizational responsiveness in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State, where organizational responsiveness is measured using managerial flexibility and dialogue.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

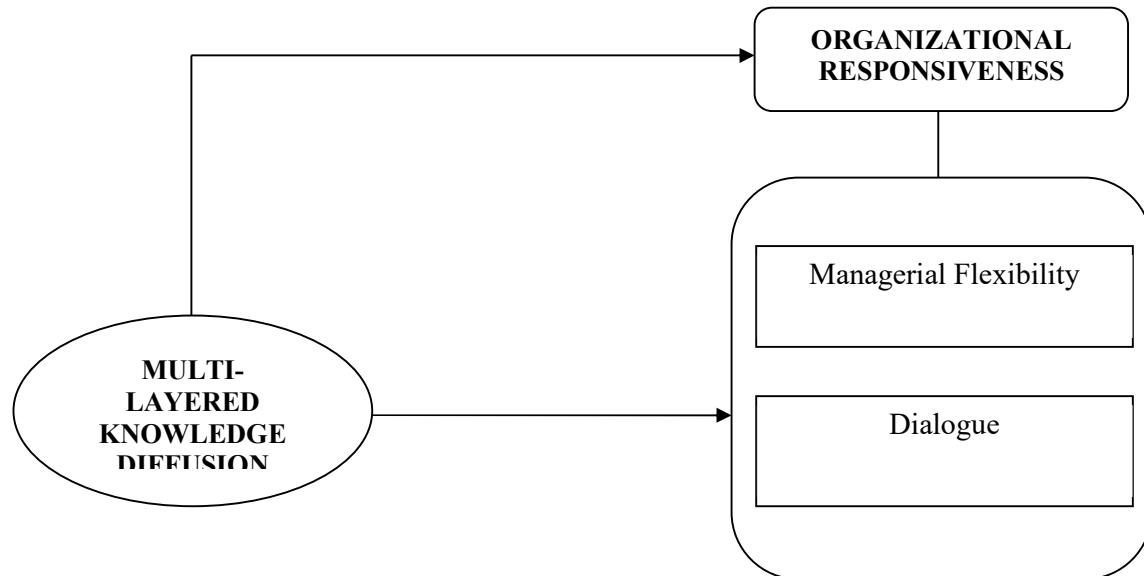


Fig. 1.1: Conceptual framework showing relationship between dimension of multi-layered knowledge diffusion (independent variable) and measures of organizational responsiveness (dependent variable).

Source: Researcher's Concept, 2022.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: Multi-layered knowledge diffusion does not have a significant relationship with managerial flexibility in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: Multi-layered knowledge diffusion does not have a significant relationship with dialogue in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work is anchored on Diffusion of Innovation Theory.

### Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Rogers' (1962) Diffusion of Innovation postulates that individuals and social systems will adopt new technologies and innovative ideas at different points and that the point an innovation is accepted into a system determines subsequent outcomes of the system. The assumptions of the theory are as follows:

- i) In a social system, there will always be a disparity in the level and time at which individuals within a given social system adopt new ideas, techniques, and technology.
- ii) Individuals and arms of institutions that adopt innovations early will naturally outperform late adopters and the laggards (Odu, 2017).

The implication of this theory is that as money deposit banks work towards enhancing their acceptance of knowledge and innovations through multi-layered knowledge diffusion that will thereafter enhance their organizational responsiveness, among others, there will be inconsistency on how and when these firms will accept to do so. It takes an organization that is open to learning new things that can easily allow the diffusion of knowledge across the organization in both horizontal and vertical movements. Borrowing from the second assumption, the theory predicts that money deposit banks who accept early enough to adopt and utilize new ideas or knowledge or innovations will outperform those who will accept later.

The justification of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory as the theoretical base of this study is based on the fact that the theory explains and predicts how early adoption of multi-layered knowledge diffusion will have more significant positive effect on their organizational responsiveness than late adoption.

### **CONCEPT OF MULTI-LAYERED KNOWLEDGE DIFFUSION**

In recent times, knowledge diffusion is often used for spreading of any multimedia content such as video, image, artwork through the internet using social media platforms (Kumar & Shivrama, 2017). In simple words, the term means it is spread in the community. The same thing has also happened in the academic world, but it is usually known by a different terminology called "diffusion." Diffusion also means the same thing which happened, but it is much different from the context in which we use viral. Diffusion is used instead of viral because the various studies are conducted to study the diffusion of knowledge in the academic community. Researchers are studying various antecedents and consequences of knowledge diffusion in a range of disciplines, i.e., statistical physics and computer science to sociology and management sciences and with the very diverse backgrounds. Thus, this has led to confusion of the concepts and procedure.

Ozei (2012) refers to knowledge diffusion as the scientific process of disseminating knowledge. This diffusion of knowledge takes place between individuals or groups and organizations for communication of research and innovations in society. This spreading of knowledge can be seen as an indicator of the progress of the society because without effective diffusion of knowledge society may not progress. Thus, in simple words, it is the process of knowledge transfer. However, according to Chen et al. (2014), "Knowledge diffusion can be defined as the adaptations and applications of knowledge documented in scientific publications and patents". Thus knowledge diffusion is a phenomenon which studies how knowledge diffused, why knowledge diffused, and at what rate knowledge diffused through academic community. Knowledge diffusion takes place when an agent broadcasts his knowledge to the agents to whom he is directly connected. Knowledge creation arises when agents receive new knowledge which is combined with their existing knowledge stocks. Thus both creation and diffusion are network-dependent activities.

Going further, multi-layered knowledge transfer is defined by Aerts et al. (2016) as the scientific means of knowledge within an organizational setting, where it can take place horizontally or vertically. Horizontal knowledge diffusion is when the knowledge is transferred from the management to the employees. Vertical knowledge diffusion is when the knowledge transfer takes place among managers or among employees (especially those of the same department). Sometimes horizontal knowledge diffusion can be a transfer of knowledge from the employee(s) to the management, especially in a situation of innovative suggestion to the organization. Knowledge diffusion within an organizational setting is mostly done in this manner – vertical and/or horizontal. Sharing knowledge in the pursuit of diffusing innovation can be a form of cooperation. Solutions to complex sustainability problems may not be obvious, and often require new

innovations or evidence. Evidence based practices, embodying common language, and establishing a shared legitimacy are critical as organizations attempt to consistently address conservation challenges. Yet having the innovations spread and get adopted within organizations is paramount to their efficacy (Perey & Benn, 2015).

A large but different literature has examined the diffusion of innovation process and the stakeholders instrumental to the process (Jonathan et al., 2018). In particular, in the last two decades, research has examined predictors of who diffuses innovations, the role of social network factors in diffusing innovations, and intra- and inter-organizational models of diffusion. Research on the evolution of cooperation has found individual characteristics, such as reputation and behavioral diversity, are important predictors for promoting cooperation (Chen et al., 2016), and that people with high reputations (e.g., trusted as expert advisors) are crucial for that process (Wang et al., 2017). Similarly, early empirical tests of the diffusion of innovations theory highlighted that individual characteristics (e.g., age, formal education) and behaviors (e.g., seeking written information, attending meetings and participating in other programs) could predict the likelihood an individual will engage in one or more stages of the diffusion process (Valente & Rogers, 2010). The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a large international biodiversity and environmental sustainability-oriented non-profit aims to influence practices and policies in arenas as diverse as sustainable agriculture and freshwater security. For such projects, evidence plays a critical role in demonstrating that conservation offers benefits to other stakeholders and partners, especially those for whom conservation may not be the primary goal (e.g., farmers, urban residents). This burden of proof is higher than working within the conservation sector because trust has to be built, and because the projects aim to deliver outcomes for biodiversity and people. It is thus critical to understand how new science ideas that build this evidence base are shared both within large conservation organizations and externally.

## **CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIVENESS**

Responsiveness is considered an ability of an organization to detect the extra-organizational changes and to take measures to adapt to the situation both by making changes internally at individual action and learning level or at organizational structures and policies, and developing active interferences to change something in the surroundings so that it was increasing this organization's adaptiveness (Peter, 2010). Jude (2019) refer to responsiveness as an organization's ability to identify and effectively adapt to the continuous change in their industry and in their customers' preferences. Companies who effectively adapt to change are better able to manage disruption and consistently meet their customers' expectations. Enabling responsiveness relies on the process of identifying, capturing, and transforming. It is assumed that organizations must constantly keep themselves in the agile state, have the ability and flexibility to couple loosely with other organizations for knowledge exchanges. Organizational responsiveness represents the ability of an organization to respond to its external environment in an appropriate manner (Clippinger, 2017). A more radical definition assumes that responsiveness is the aggressiveness of an organization's marketplace strategy (Gresov et al., 2015).

Jacobs (2013) proposes that responsiveness as a socially constructed attribute refers to the perceptual, reflective and adaptive dimension of an organization. Responsiveness refers to the ability of an organization to increase the chances for reflective conversation. According to Jacobs (2013), organizational responsiveness provides a conceptual lens at the macro-level to reflect on strategy and organizational development. At the micro-level of responsive practices, dialogue as a reflective form of conversation allows for processes through which such responses can be collaboratively developed. Responsiveness at macro level is grounded in the communicative acts that drive and shape the individuals' perception of the organization. From the experiments of Jacobs (2013), organizational stakeholders refer to the notion of responsiveness as a capacity that is attributed to both the local unit as well as the overall organization. They identified three areas related to the notion of responsiveness: the need to be listened to, the experience of being understood, and the experience of some satisfying response from the organization.

Organizational responsiveness can be described as a firm's propensity to act based on market information generated (Hult et al. 2005 in Tamunomiebi & Green, 2020). Taking the view of market

information process, Kohli and Jaworski (2016) correspond organizational responsiveness to information utilization within the organization, which is composed of two sets of activities - response design (the use of market intelligence to develop plans) and response implementation (the use of market intelligence to execute such plans). Kohli and Jaworski (2016) also identified several concrete forms of organizational responsiveness including, selecting target markets, designing and offering products and services that cater to customers' current and anticipated needs, and producing, distributing, and promoting the products in a way that elicits favourable end-customer response (Kohli & Jaworski, 2016).

Thomas et al. (2014) averred that the view of information utilization differs from a cognitive approach, which has its foundation in a view that firms' action is shaped by how managers notice and make sense of their environments and translate those perspectives into strategic choice. The institutional theory offers a position which enhances the understanding of the interaction between organizations and their environment, and the tendency for achieving innovation. As pointed out by Kohli and Jaworski (2016), changing market needs call for the introduction of innovative products and services to match the evolving needs of the market and environment. The introduction of new and modified services and products, however, is inherently risky because such may have a high tendency for failure.

As a result of the high risk involved with innovation and resources required for responsiveness, an organization does not respond to every market change detected, instead, the organizational responsiveness is facilitated by the mental models regarding how decisions should be carried out. Managerial cognition and actions thus link a firm's actions to a changing environment by influencing what is noticed, how this information is interpreted, and why certain choices are made (Kaplan, 2008). According to this view, organizational responsiveness involves two sequential stages—the market situation interpretation and actual responses (Chattopadhyay et al., 2011; White et al., 2013).

Finally, responsive organisations are designed to learn and react quickly through the open flow of information, to promote experimentation and learning in rapid cycles and to organise themselves as a network of employees, customers and partners motivated by common goals (Jude, 2019). The "responsive org manifesto" formulates the basic principles of new organizational models. In contrast to classical hierarchical structures, these are adapted to a dynamic environment, which is often described by the acronym "VUCA" (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity).

## **MEASURES OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIVENESS**

### **Managerial Flexibility**

One of the ways in which organizations can be responsive is through managerial flexibility. Managerial flexibility, according to Great (2018), refers to the ability of the management of a company or fund to make investment decisions and other decisions based on current or projected market conditions, as opposed to any preconceived notions. According to Volberda (2012), organizational flexibility is the outcome of an interaction between the responsiveness of the organization (organization design task) and the managerial capabilities (managerial task). These two sets of variables express the paradox of flexibility. As a managerial task, flexibility is considered a dynamic capability, which is manifested by a hierarchy of capabilities: operational, structural and strategic (Ansoff & Brandenburg, 2015). Flexibility management has implications for the operative, structural and strategic levels of companies. Flexibility as a managerial task has three main dimensions: variety (or range), time (or speed) and cost. Range or variety refers to the quantity of capabilities that a firm possesses to cope with demands of the environment. Flexibility is a purely internal variable (Wright & Snell, 2011). Since, flexibility is a concept deeply linked to the business environment, we need the notion of fit to understand the nature of flexibility. Fit is understood to be the internal consistency of a set of theoretically related fundamental variables (Venkatraman, 2017). Fit can be seen as a temporary state: the interconnection of two variables, one internal and the other external. The internal measures of flexibility show us the potential of the company's managerial practices, but we cannot corroborate whether that potentiality achieves the objective (the environmental adaptation). We therefore propose another notion of flexibility, the dynamic capability that organizations have to remain co-aligned with the context or to attempt to correct

deviations from what is required. In operative terms, we operationalize flexibility as the capability to stay co-aligned with the business environment over time.

Flexibility is complex, and we consider two determinants: financial flexibility and metaflexibility, or learning capability. The first concept indicates the organization's capacity to come up with liquidity (Evans, 2015) or resources that are not committed in the long term (Volberda, 2012). Upton's (1994) definition suggests this meaning by considering that it is an ability to change with few cost penalizations. In other words, in the absence of financial limitations, all companies can change easily and can thus be more flexible, since flexibility has a cost (Sanchez, 2016). Financial flexibility is thus related to organizational slack (Bourgeois, 2010).

## **Dialogue**

A dialogue means transformation of ideas, thoughts, and words between two or more persons. However, in an organizational environment, the vitality of dialogue is even on a larger side. A dialogue is a route which can refine organizational environment for conducive management. A dialogue tends to prevent various constraints and wastage of time, money and other efforts. This notepaper focuses to explore the need and importance of a dialogue in an organization, and how encouraging a dialogue in teams can lead to transformation of its culture that neither party in a relationship nor any individual participant in a group/team or a network can produce solely. It will demonstrate the meaning of dialogue and its significance in teams in organizations and also the difficult tasks that are faced by firms. It will indicate that despite the challenges it is a remedy for various organizational issues.

According to Bakhtin (2014), dialogue is a power of discourse to increase understanding of multiple perspectives and create myriad possibilities. According to Robust (2013), dialogue alters the psychology of a group. The definition puts light on the fact that dialogue creates a new understanding among individuals leading to better interpersonal relationships. A dialogue in a group of people can help them talk together in order to explore their diverse options or ideas about an issue.

Dialogue is a central element in two major approaches to organizational change: organizational communication and organizational learning. Research within these two fields focuses among others on processes and tools for managing the people side of change at an organizational level and on individual change management (e.g. creating awareness, desire, knowledge etc.). However, there has been limited research conducted on dialogue in organizational contexts, and the little research there has been has focused more on functional or content-related elements of organizational dialogue such as mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk and commitment (Kent & Taylor, 2012; Roman, 2015) and less on structural and contextual elements.

Within organizational communication, two aspects – structure and process – constitute what is ordinarily regarded as “the central core of organizational communication” (Jablin et al., 2013: 8). According to Jablin et al. (2013), organizational communication is: (1) a phenomenon occurring at multiple, interrelated levels of analysis (dyadic, group, organizational and extra-organizational); and (2) a multi-/interdisciplinary research enterprise. Different perspectives or metaphors have been identified to characterize conceptualizations and approaches to the study of organizational communication (Putnam et al., 2016). In the same way that psychology, sociology or economics can be thought of as capable of explaining organizational processes, communication might also be thought of as a distinct mode of explanation or way of thinking about organizations (Deetz 2011). Deetz (2011) noted that communication theory can be used to explain the production of social structures, psychological states, member categories, knowledge and so forth, rather than to conceptualize one phenomenon among these others in organizations. In line with this, dialogue theory and analysis can be used to explain organizational gains such as motivation, learning, development and collaboration (Bohm 2018; Ellinor & Gerard 2014; Isaacs 2016).

Dialogue can also in itself be considered an expression of business ethics (Pearson 1989). The ethical aspect is important today in a world where companies operate in a globalized context and where concepts such as identity, image, reputation and Corporate Social Responsibility are even

more crucial to survival than before (Cornelissen 2014). Engaging employees in a dialogue for change can be an ethically correct approach if the dialogue is not manipulative and indirectly results into technocratic and top-down formulated changes. A learning perspective on organizational change includes a broad array of topics. From an individual perspective, the change may be a new behavior. From a business perspective, the change may be a new business process and/or a new technology. Successful change, however, requires more than a new process or technology; it requires the participation and empowerment of the people involved. Change management provides a framework for managing the people side of these changes. The most recent research points to a combination of organizational change management tools and individual change management models for effective change to take place, i.e. dialogue at different levels. Argyris and Schön (2010) recognized the need for what is now termed the learning organization.

### **MULTI-LAYERED KNOWLEDGE DIFFUSION IN THE ADVANCING OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIVENESS**

According to Ozei (2012) definition of knowledge diffusion, it is the scientific process of disseminating knowledge. Knowledge diffusion is often used for spreading of any multimedia content such as video, image, artwork through the internet using social media platforms (Kumar & Shivrama, 2017). This diffusion of knowledge takes place between individuals or groups and organizations for communication of research and innovations in society. Organizations like money deposit banks can utilize digital tools like WhatsApp, Facebook or platforms like seminars, lectures, online classes, etc. to diffuse knowledge or innovations across the organization. Sometimes the knowledge diffusion can first of happen in the vertical form (from management to employees) and thereafter the horizontal form (among employees, especially in the departmental level). An organization that enjoys seamless diffusion of knowledge/innovations that later imparts positively on their productivity, profitability, etc. will easily find the need to be flexible, as this will give way for more innovative ideas to spread like wildfire. Responsive organisations are designed to learn and react quickly through the open flow of information, to promote experimentation and learning in rapid cycles and to organise themselves as a network of employees, customers and partners motivated by common goals (Jude, 2019). An organization that has observed that over time, there flexibility has always landed them in loss and frustration will not be quick to diffuse knowledge across the organization.

An organization that is responsive is one that is flexible, adaptive, open to innovations, etc. Such organization allows for dialogue that will lead to growth in diverse dimensions. This means that such organization will allow multi-layered knowledge diffusion, being that previous knowledge transfer in the organization yielded positive result. Enabling responsiveness relies on the process of identifying, capturing, and transforming. It is assumed that organizations must constantly keep themselves in the agile state, have the ability and flexibility to couple loosely with other organizations for knowledge exchanges. It is through organizational responsiveness that organizations respond to their external environment in an appropriate manner. Multi-layered diffusion of knowledge helps organizations to speedily, seamlessly and appropriately transfer knowledge among managers and employees for quick adoption and impact (Kumar & Shivrama, 2017). When management transfers the knowledge to employees, employees then departmentally spread the knowledge among themselves so that they it can be adopted especially for experimental purpose. When the experiment yields positive result, it boosts the organization's morale to continue with it and to even accept to adopt subsequent innovative ideas. This will therefore enhance the organization's responsiveness, especially in terms of managerial flexibility and dialogue.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research adopted explanatory cross sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of twenty (20) Deposit Money Banks operating Rivers State, Nigeria. The entire population (20 Deposit Money Banks) was used without sampling since the population was considered to be small. Thus, the study was a census study. Thus, five (5) top managers (General Manager, Operations Manager, Human Resource Manager, Customer Relations Manager, and

Information Technology Manager) were selected in the state headquarters of each of the banks in Rivers State as the sample size of the study. A total of one hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were administered and ninety-five (95) were retrieved.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was applied in the data analysis using the statistical tool: the test of hypotheses was done using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The Spearman's (rho) correlation was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at  $P < 0.05$  (two-tailed test).

## RESULTS

$H_0_1$ : Multi-layered knowledge diffusion does not have a significant relationship with managerial flexibility in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Multi-layered Knowledge Diffusion and Managerial Flexibility**

			Multi-layered Knowledge Diffusion	Managerial Flexibility
Pearson r	Multi-layered Knowledge Diffusion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.701**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	95	95
	Managerial Flexibility	Correlation Coefficient	.701**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	95	95

Source: SPSS Data Output, 2022.

Table 1 above shows a correlation value of 0.901 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to multi-layered knowledge diffusion and managerial flexibility. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0_1$ ) which states that Multi-layered knowledge diffusion does not have a significant relationship with managerial flexibility in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between multi-layered knowledge diffusion and managerial flexibility. With a correlation value of 0.701, the result reveals that multi-layered knowledge diffusion has a strong positive relationship with managerial flexibility in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State. This equally implies that increase in multi-layered knowledge diffusion will result to a significant improvement in managerial flexibility in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

$H_0_2$ : Multi-layered knowledge diffusion does not have a significant relationship with dialogue in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Multi-layered Knowledge Diffusion and Dialogue**

			Multi-layered Knowledge Diffusion	Dialogue
Pearson r	Multi-layered Knowledge Diffusion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.633**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	95	95
	Dialogue	Correlation Coefficient	.633**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

N	95	95
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Source: SPSS Data Output, 2022.

Table 2 above shows a correlation value of 0.633 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to multi-layered knowledge diffusion and dialogue. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which states that Multi-layered knowledge diffusion does not have a significant relationship with dialogue in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between multi-layered knowledge diffusion and dialogue. With a correlation value of 0.633, the result reveals that multi-layered knowledge diffusion has a strong positive relationship with dialogue in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State. This equally implies that increase in multi-layered knowledge diffusion will result to a significant improvement in managerial flexibility in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test of hypothesis one revealed that multi-layered knowledge diffusion has a strong positive relationship with managerial flexibility in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State. This implies that the hierarchical spread of knowledge across an organization can thereafter lead to managerial flexibility in an organization such as a money deposit bank. In tandem with this, Chen et al. (2014) posited that the flexibility of an organization is most times caused by the fact that such organization has observed that their previous acceptance and adoption of innovations through knowledge diffusion have been helpful in advancing the course of the organization. Organizations such as money deposit banks utilize knowledge diffusion to communicate new ideas and other innovative discoveries which they presume would impart the organization in one positive way or the other. By the time their presumption comes out true, they get encouraged to do so subsequently, thereby enhancing managerial flexibility among others. In other words, such bank will be flexible enough to allow for swift diffusion of knowledge in a later time, being that previous experiments have yielded positive outcome. Organizations like money deposit banks can utilize digital tools like WhatsApp, Facebook or platforms like seminars, lectures, online classes, etc. to diffuse knowledge or innovations across the organization. Sometimes the knowledge diffusion can first of happen in the vertical form (from management to employees) and thereafter the horizontal form (among employees, especially in the departmental level). An organization that enjoys seamless diffusion of knowledge/innovations that later imparts positively on their productivity, profitability, etc. will easily find the need to be flexible, as this will give way for more innovative ideas to spread like wildfire. Responsive organisations are designed to learn and react quickly through the open flow of information, to promote experimentation and learning in rapid cycles and to organise themselves as a network of employees, customers and partners motivated by common goals (Jude, 2019). On the flipside, if an organization observes that over time, there flexibility has always landed them in loss and frustration, it will not be quick to diffuse knowledge across the organization, meaning that managerial flexibility will be on the dwindling side.

The test of hypothesis two revealed that multi-layered knowledge diffusion has a strong positive relationship with dialogue in Money Deposit Banks in Rivers State. This implies that the transfer of knowledge from the management to selected employees and from there to the rest of the employees have a way a way in which it advances dialogue in the organization. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Tomasz and Kijek (2008) who found that a lot of organizations that are reluctant towards dialogue for innovative reasons do so because previous ones have not really imparted as expected. Organizations, especially money deposit banks, are not ready to go into what will get them into loss. That is to say that when an acceptance and adoption of knowledge does not yield profit of any kind as expected, the chances of the organization to allow for such becomes very slim, reason being that it is very risky at this point. But if the reverse is the case, the management gets highly persuaded and confident to allow for subsequent dialogue that tolls on the path of knowledge and innovation diffusion that is expected to certainly impart the organization. Additionally, when management transfers knowledge to employees, employees departmentally spread the knowledge among themselves so that it can be adopted, especially for

experimental purpose. When the experiment yields positive result, it boosts the organization's morale to continue with it and to even accept to adopt subsequent innovative ideas. This will therefore enhance the organization's responsiveness, especially in terms of managerial flexibility and dialogue. This therefore shows that multi-layered knowledge diffusion encourages dialogue in organizations such as money deposit banks.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study has shown that multi-layered knowledge diffusion advances the course of organizational responsiveness in money deposit banks in Rivers State. When organizations test an innovative idea and it produces result in the positive path, it inspires the organization's responsiveness in a subsequent time to allow for the transfer of knowledge, talent, innovative concepts, etc. for the advancing of the organization's course. The reverse is the case when the result of the first experimental exercise is negative. Such organization's responsiveness in allowing another experimental exercise will drastically drop, giving rise to poor managerial flexibility and dialogue in the organization. At this juncture, this work therefore concludes that multi-layered knowledge diffusion is a tool with which organizations such as money deposit banks can utilize to advance their responsiveness in terms of managerial flexibility and dialogue, among others. Deposit money banks and other organizations that place less value on multi-layered knowledge diffusion might have issues advancing their responsiveness.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of money deposit banks should encourage proper diffusion of knowledge across all appropriate quarters so that such exercise can yield positive result that will highly advance organizational responsiveness.
2. Management should critically analyze every innovative idea before acceptance and adoption are carried, so as to avoid situations that will deter them from being responsive when they really need to be, especially in terms of managerial flexibility and dialogue.
3. Employees should as well critically criticize every innovation they discover before introducing such to management and persuading that it be adopted. This might result to a big loss that will thereafter negatively affect the organization's responsiveness.

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