

**TECHNO-OVERLOAD AND OFFICE MANAGERS' PERFORMANCE IN PAINT
MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between techno- overload and office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The objective of the study was to examine how techno-overload relate with the measures of office managers' performance such as work quality, timely dissemination of information and task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The explanatory cross section survey research was adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of one hundred and ten (110) office managers of nineteen (19) registered paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. A sample of one hundred and ten (110) respondents was obtained using census sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection after face-validation. Cronbach alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument. Out of 110 copies of the questionnaire administered, a total of 90 copies were retrieved. Mean and standard deviation was used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman rank order correlation. The findings revealed that techno-overload have significant negative relationship on office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that techno- overload has negative effect on office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study recommended that management of paint manufacturing firms could provide regular hands-on ICT training for administrative heads and their assistants to enable them upgrade and update their digital skills and experiences to close the digital skills gap in the system.

INTRODUCTION

Techno-overload is a serious stressor for workers in the manufacturing industry. Workers are sometimes given unrealistic production targets and deadlines by their supervisors with the assumption that they can achieve so much within a limited time frame with the speed of machines (Odu, 2018). While we know that technologies make production easier and faster, the fact is that these machines cannot work on their own without humans operating it. Thus, the worker has to over-work himself exerting his full mental and physical energy to get the work done. Sometimes, the machine might even disappoint. All these circumstances put the average worker in the manufacturing industry into a form of stress known as techno-overload. Within the context of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt as used in this study, excessive SMS/call and digital work-life imbalance are seen as manifestation of techno-overload.

An Office manager is responsible for monitoring and reviewing systems, usually focusing on specific outcomes such as improved timescales, turnover, output, sales, etc. They may supervise or manage a team of administrators, allocating roles, recruiting and training, and issuing assignments and projects (Olali, 2017). Bedford (2015) added that office managers are in charge of customer service, report writing, budget management, database management, systems analysis, purchasing, book keeping, human resources supervision, and records management, form/template design, website maintenance, and payroll management in most public and private establishments. Within the context of this study, office managers are unit heads, however, office managers' performance refers to the extent to which personnel in charge of planning, coordinating and ensuring proper generation, circulation and preservation of data/information regarding the operations of an office or unit of an organization discharges his or her duties efficiently. Job performance of office managers is a result of the actions that have been set to achieve goals

based on certain standards. This usually involves the actions or behaviour of all mental processes that are not observable (Bailey & Robert, 2003). There are several height of measuring office managers' performance, but this study focuses on work quality, timely information dissemination and task accomplishment.

Work quality depicts a unit of production of goods and service in an excellent or improved manner. Quality is critical to satisfying Customers: failure to meet customers' expectation, will make them quickly look for alternatives. Quality is critical to satisfying customers and retaining their loyalty so they continue to patronize the organization in the future. Quality products make an important contribution to long-term revenue and profitability (Clement, 2017; Elshaer, 2016). Timely information dissemination as the second measure of office managers' performance refers to how prompt the office managers ensures that files and data/information reach the right person(s) at the right time. It also deals with the ability of an office manager to complete administrative tasks like typesetting, appointments, purchases of office resources, etc. on time. For the information manager to effectively act as an important link and interface between the top management and the operating core, he must be conscious of timely circulation of information to its users within the periscope of jurisdiction (Roth, 2016). The last measure of this study is task accomplishment. Conceptually, timely task completion is defined as the ability of employees at all levels to effectively carry out assigned targets/tasks within record time or before deadline. Employees at all levels including information managers are primarily employed to provide administrative assistance and carry out other office tasks assigned to him/her. Employers and bosses look out for office managers that can accomplish any assignment, task or target given to them promptly or early enough before deadline. In fact, an information manager that is fond of completing tasks at the last minute or deadline can be said to be underperforming. The information manager and other employees are expected to be up and doing in preparation of documents, information dissemination, and carrying out their day to day official duties (Nayyar, 2015).

Nevertheless, the manifestation of the variables, dimensions and measures aforementioned in this study is determined by environmental factors of the organization. This implies that the environmental factors in terms of ventilation/temperature and condition of office equipment moderates the perceived relationship between technology-induced stress and office managers' performance within the confide of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

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

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Techno-Overload

Information and communication technology (ICT) users are recurring overwhelmed with information from laptops, smartphones and PDAs, resulting in work overload. In an organizational context, employees are inundated with too much information which they fail to resourcefully utilize (Fisher & Wesolkowski in Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). This, in combination with the increasing levels of complexity in the ever changing ICTs, generates feelings of the inability to cope, leading to stress (Clark & Kalin in Tarafdar et al., 2010) as well as "information fatigue" as described by Weil and Rosen in Mlotshwa (2013). Additionally, when new systems are implemented, old functions are eliminated as processes are reengineered and new structures of power, authority, and decision making are created in the process, which changes the role of the ICT end user and that of the manager and/or supervisor (Tarafdar et al., 2010).

As used in this work, techno-overload denotes stress arising from excessive multiple tasks expected to be completed by an individual with the assumption that they can accomplish them very fast as a result of ICT. It could be describe as when job demands get too great the person feels he or she has too much to do and too little time. For example, new equipment, new software, and new information sources (the Internet) place increased work demands on the office manager and time constraints might not allow for proper implementation. The pervasive connectedness to workplace afforded by the mobility of ICT, however, allows work to invade times and spaces that were traditionally protected from workplace's intrusion. ICT can lead to stress as they allow work to spill into space reserved for family and self (Murray & Rostis, 2017). The more people rely on communication technologies, the more they work from home and locations other than their office. Furthermore, the more they use these technologies, the more likely they are to report feeling burned out. Olson-Buchanan (2007) argued that e-mail and other communication technologies produce stress by enabling work to spill into other domains of life, particularly, encroaching upon the time reserved for self and family, thereby making it more difficult to disengage from work and fulfill family obligations.

Excessive SMS/Call: The development and deployment of new information and communication technologies such as the internet, cell phone and especially e-mail is universally seen as a major source of information overload among the employees in paint manufacturing firms. Technological advances have made the retrieval, production, and distribution of information much easier than in earlier periods. Because the use of new information and communication media is on the rise, technical, economic, and social filters become less effective and can easily be evaded. Moreover, the same information is now accessible everywhere and is distributed through diverse media (e.g., newspapers, television, the Internet, intranets with newsfeeds, and personal communication). Odu (2018) noted that as information arrives from multiple sources, the user is required to adapt not only to the content but also to the different demands made by each individual source. The user might also have intellectual difficulty in fitting information within a cognitive usable framework. The medium through which information is communicated, and the manner in which it is delivered and presented, can also cause feelings of overload (Eze, 2018).

However, the numerous calls and messages at the disposal of the office managers especially at the customer care unit in the paint manufacturing firms in order to meet the customers' demands has raised serious concern and constitutes one of the information induced stress or info-stressor. This development is due to the numerous customers at the disposed of the attendant with divers calls and messages which becomes difficult to assimilate or digest the information he/she is required to act within the short frame of time.

Digital Work-Life Imbalance: Work-life balance has become an increasingly pervasive concern to both employers and employees of most organizations world-wide. Work-life balance primarily deals with employees' ability to properly prioritize between their work and everyday life, social life, health, family etc. Work life balance (WLB) is largely associated with matters of workers' productivity, performance and job satisfaction. Where there is appropriate balance between work and life, office and information managers became predisposed to putting in their best shots at work, because their families are contented.

Digital work-life imbalance is predicted on office managers' inability to complete all official tasks in the office. This is noted on the fact that even at home office managers' still attend to work related issues such as e-mailing of document, receiving of telephone call etc, thus causing imbalance in office managers' work-life balance. No matter how it is justified, taking official work home is the act of allowing work to encroach into personal life which causes an imbalance between work and personal life.

Concept of Office Manager's Performance

In economic development and global competition, many companies are still surviving until today. Most of these companies are believed to survive due to employee performance including the performance of the office manager. However, the important issue is how to improve office managers' job performance which is related to survival and development of business and it can be sustained. Thus, performance should be considered in order to provide benefits to the company. This is because the benefits depend on individual employee performance (Yao, 2019). To understand more about the overall performance, the section below elaborates more on definition of job performance especially as it regards office managers, the purpose of performance appraisal, the performances appraisal methods and the last is the measurement for employee performance.

Conceptually, office managers' performance represents the extent to which personnel in charge of planning, coordinating and ensuring proper generation, circulation and preservation of data/information regarding the operations of an office or unit of an organization discharges his or her duties. As mentioned by Jamshidi (2011), performance refers to the characteristics of an individual's success in its work. Then, the performance usually involves the calculation of the individual output level for example, ability to dispense information just-in-time, effective record keeping and effective supervision as it concerns office and office managers which leads to sales or production, or to assess the level of success compared with the expectations of the organization (Kazemi & Abbas, 2006).

Job performance of office managers is a result of the actions that have been set to achieve goals based on certain standards. This usually involves the actions or behavior of all mental processes that are not observable. This includes problem solving, decision making, program planning, and reasoning (Bailey & Robert, 2013). Overall assessment on the performance of the employees is usually involving the performance result and work processes such as evaluating how the employees do the work and results achieved from that second process is considered as performance (Soltani & Iraj, 2009).

In the company, the word "performance" is often used among the human resources personnel, and industrial psychology and the management. Then, without taking into account the importance and the popularity, it is difficult and rarely to clearly defined (Neely, 1995). Gryn (2010), job performances is the behaviour that can be observed and non-observable behaviour that can be assessed.

Besides, office managers' Job Performance can be defined as a concept of multidimensional that shows the way an office manager completes his task, which is focused on efficiency, the use of skills, initiatives and the resources used (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2013). Furthermore, the actions that involve the process and product (final output) also refer as the performance of the job. However, the individual process can affect the overall performances of the organization. This is because the performance of individual is not only determined by actions but also others factor such as external factor. The example of external factor are the organizational culture and economy, the availability of the resources including word processing applications like MS word, MS PowerPoint and PDF converter/optical character recognition.

Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance

It could be expatiated that though ICT users are recurrently overwhelmed with information from laptops, smartphones and personal digital assistants (PDAs), resulting in work overload, it does not disable an employee from accomplishing his or her task, because tasks are related to the nisus one has to carry out a task which ordinarily cannot be determined by techno-overload. Rather, it is tied to the skills, knowledge, ideas the employee has as related the job. Techno-overload is a serious stressor for workers in the manufacturing industry. Workers are sometimes given unrealistic production targets and deadlines by their supervisors with the assumption that they can achieve so much within a limited time frame with the speed of machines (Odu, 2018). Thus, this causes work-life imbalance because, even at home most office managers' still attend to work

related issues such as e-mailing of document, receiving of telephone call etc, thus causing imbalance in office managers' work-life balance. No matter how it is justified, taking official work home is the act of allowing work to encroach into personal life which causes an imbalance between work and personal life. However, the numerous calls and messages at the disposal of the office managers especially at the customer care unit in the paint manufacturing firms in order to meet the customers' demands has raised serious concern and constitutes one of the information induced stress or info-stressor. This development is due to the numerous customers at the disposer of the attendant with divers calls and messages which becomes difficult to assimilate or digest the information he is required to act within the short frame of time.

Empirical Review

Fafaa (2020) examined technostress and employee job performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The purpose of the study was to examine how three dimensions of technostress (techno-complexity, techno-uncertainty, and techno-overload) influence three measures of employee performance (work quality, timely information dissemination, and tasks accomplishment) respectively. The population of the study was two hundred and sixty-eight (268) staff of the five (5) selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, while the Krejcie and Morgan table was used to obtain the sample size of one hundred and twenty-seven (127) respondents. The exploratory research design was adopted which necessitated the test of hypotheses. A total of one hundred and twenty-seven (127) questionnaires were administered by the researcher and was able to retrieve ninety (90) copies which represent 70.8% of the total questionnaire distributed. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage for the research questions while Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (R) was used for the test of hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The following findings were made: techno-complexity influences work quality of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State; techno-uncertainty does not influence employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Rivers State; and that techno-overload does not influence employees' ability to accomplish tasks on time in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study concluded that technostress has no significant relationship with employee performance in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. It was therefore recommended among others that employees should be trained on the use of modern technological devices tied to the operations of the business to get acquainted with the devices, thus improving on their job performance.

It should be noted that Fafaa (2020) examined technostress and employee job performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. This does not fully represent the dimensions and measures in this current study. Thus, this current study examines technology-induced stress and office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Dimensionalizing on techno-complexity (digital skill gap and digital infrastructure upgrade), techno-uncertainty (network problem and computer hanging) and techno-overload (excessive SMS/call and digital work-life imbalance); measuring on work quality (production of mailable document and meeting target specification), timely information dissemination (timely reporting and timely notification) and task accomplishment (timely completion of document and timely completion of arrangement); moderated by environmental factors in terms of ventilation/temperature and office equipment condition.

Olasanmi (2016) examined the level of technostress experienced among Nigerian auditors in four auditing firms in Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine the level of technostress experienced among Nigerian auditors; identify the ergonomic hazards associated with Nigerian auditors' job; identify the strategies adopted by workers of audit firms in Nigeria to cope with technostress. Survey research design was adopted and questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The analysis in this study revealed that there is much difference in the way individual auditors are affected by the issues of technostress and ergonomic hazards, and how

these variables impacted on the entire organization. In all the organizations considered on the whole, it was revealed that an insignificant relationship existed between level of technostress and performance and between ergonomic hazards and performance within audit firms, although, individual assessment gave significant relationships on some ergonomic hazards. The finding of this study is instructive. If auditors generally experience some level and forms of technostress as a result of the automated nature of their work, it is instructive that office/information managers will not be an exception. Administrators' effectiveness might be equally affected negatively by incidents of technostress.

It should be noted that Olasanmi (2016) examined the level of technostress experienced among Nigerian auditors in four auditing firms in Nigeria. This does not fully represent the dimensions and measures in this current study. Thus, this current study examines technology-induced stress and office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Dimensionalizing on techno-complexity (digital skill gap and digital infrastructure upgrade), techno-uncertainty (network problem and computer hanging) and techno-overload (excessive SMS/call and digital work-life imbalance); measuring on work quality (production of mailable document and meeting target specification), timely information dissemination (timely reporting and timely notification) and task accomplishment (timely completion of document and timely completion of arrangement); moderated by environmental factors in terms of ventilation/temperature and office equipment condition.

Osita (2018) examined the influence of technostress on business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The objective of the study was to examine how dimensions of technostress such as technical breakdown, technological skills gap, and poor power supply influences business educators' job performance in terms of instructional delivery and number of publications. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Questionnaire was used to elicit response from a population of one hundred and eleven (111) business education lecturers. Four hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The study revealed that technostress is negatively correlated with business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The study concluded that technostress hampers effective performance of duties among business educators in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consists of one hundred and ten (110) office managers (heads of departments) of nineteen (19) registered paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The above information was obtained from Paint Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (PMAN), Rivers State Branch. The census method was adopted since the population is not large. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The work adopted the face and content validity Cronbach alpha was used in determining the internal consistency of the instrument. Thus, a Cronbach alpha level of 0.70. Mean and standard deviation was used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman rank order correlation. Multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation. The entire process of analysis done via SPSS. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was computed with the formula below:

$$R = \frac{1}{n} \frac{6\sum d^2}{(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where;

n = number of pairs of data

d = difference between the ranking in each set of data.

Σ = Summation

If our statistical analysis shows that the significance level is below the cut-off value we have set (which is 0.05), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. Alternatively, if the significance level is above the cut-off value, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Results

Bivariate Analysis of the Variables

Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Correlations between Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance

		Techno-Overload	Work Quality	Timely Information Dissemination	Task Accomplishment
Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.213**	-.411**	-.280**
Techno-Overload	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90
Correlation Coefficient		.213**	1.000	.850**	.509**
Work Quality	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90
Correlation Coefficient		-.111**	.	1.000	.730**
Timely Information Dissemination	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90
Correlation Coefficient		-.280**	.509**	.730**	1.000
Task Accomplishment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

Column two of Table above shows r value of -0.213 at a significant value of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to techno-overload and work quality. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₁) which states that there is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₁) was accepted. This implies that there is a weak negative relationship

between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Column three of Table above shows r value of 0.411 at a significant level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to techno-overload and timely information dissemination. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) which states that there is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt was rejected. This implies that there is a moderate negative relationship between techno-overload and office managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Column four of Table 4.21 above shows r value of -0.280 at a significant level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to techno-overload and task accomplishment. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) which states that there is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a3}) was accepted. This implies that there is a weak negative relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

These results gotten indicated that there is a weak relationship between techno-overload and office managers' job performance in terms of work quality, timely information dissemination and task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance

The test of hypotheses seven, eight and nine revealed that techno-overload has a significant low or weak relationship with office managers' performance in terms of work quality, timely information dissemination and task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. This implies that increase in administrative workload due to the availability of ICT facilities brings about inadequate performance of office managers which relationship that exist between them is weak in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Although, Otamiri (2019) revealed that increase in administrative responsibility is positively correlated with the effectiveness of principals in Rivers State. This buttresses the fact that stress is not completely negative as it is often believed (Ameh, 2014). While it is true that the use of ICT has increased the amount of workload administrators are expected to accomplish within a very short space of time, it is capable of bringing out the best in administrative workaholics.

Administrative workaholics are administrative personnel with high level of mental and physical resilience which enables them to function and achieve especially under very stressful conditions. As the office and information manager continues to handle more digital responsibilities, it has a way of sharpening their skills as well as making them more dexterous in handling difficult tasks. Overtime, the office and information manager succeeds in developing proven ways of handling routine jobs faster and more effectively using the templates and processes they have mastered and established, having done the same kind of job over and over.

However, this finding is in sharp contrast with the findings of Shalini, et al. (2017) that technology-induced work-overload impairs employee innovativeness as a result of mental exhaustion. Rafferty and Griffin, (2016) had pointed that any environmental or psychological factor that is capable of impairing innovativeness is also capable of reducing the individual's efficiency and effectiveness at work. By above assertion, the fact that Shalini, et al. (2017) found that techno-overload impairs innovativeness equally implies that it is capable of hampering the administrative effectiveness of office and information managers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Admittedly, when the office and information manager has a lot of administrative tasks to

accomplish with his computer system, it does not only lead to physical and mental exhaustion, it can also lead to information obesity. This is a situation where the individual has too many information at his disposal that he begins to misapply them or feels overwhelmed. Under this circumstance, the office and information manager may not be able to function effectively.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analyses of data and discussion of findings, the study concluded that techno-overload has negative effect on office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study also concluded that techno-overload if well managed enhances the performance of office managers in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Employees of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt could ensure they handle all phone calls relating to their job in the office.
2. Management could ensure electronic files are backed in external storage devices as well as online platforms such as e-mail and google drive to guarantee recovery of data/information in the event of information security breach.
3. As a way of self-help, employees could always give in their best at work so that incessant calls and messages will not be received when in non-official hours.
4. Management of paint manufacturing firms could ensure to provide enabling work environment to enhance job performance of employees.

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