

**ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY AS MODERATE ROLE ON SELF-DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
AND OFFICE MANAGER GROWTH IN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS
STATE NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This work examined Organisational Policy as Moderating role on Self-Development Strategies and Office Manager Growth in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State Nigeria. The researcher adopted explanatory cross-sectional survey research design being a research framework that involves the test of hypotheses using primary or secondary data obtained from the field by use of questionnaire, interview, observation or any other appropriate social science data collection tool. The population of this study consist seven (7) public tertiary institutions in Rivers Nigeria, with ninety-eight (98) office managers serving as the respondents on behalf of the institutions. The purposive sampling technique was used which grants the researcher the freedom to assume or choose a sample size that the researcher will be able to access. To determine the criterion mean, the four-point Likert scale was added up and the total divided by four (4). The data research questions were analyzed using the descriptive research, mean procedures for research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The following findings were made: that organizational policy has significant moderating effects on the relationship between self-development strategies and office manager growth. From the findings obtained from empirical literature and results from our tested hypothesis, we conclude that Organizational policies should be seen as very essential in the running of the institution. Therefore, in formulating policies, organizations should endeavor to make policies that encourage self-development, as well as reward system for employees who personally engage in training and development, as it will enhance quality service delivery, innovativeness efficient record management.

Keywords: Organisational Policy, Self-Development Strategies, Office Manager Growth

INTRODUCTION

Naturally, the desire of an average employee/professional is to grow and if possible, reach the peak of his/her career. This desire for growth, becoming what one is capable of becoming and maximizing one's potential is in other words explained to mean- *need for self-actualization* in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Wehrich, *et al* 2011).

The truth however remains that this desire cannot be achieved without a conscious effort activated by factors responsible for growth. In many organizations, promoting an employee to some certain positions requires that he/she must have acquired certain Skills, abilities, Work performance, Education qualifications, Technical/professional certifications or qualifications as well as some level of training (Indeed, 2022). This implies that office managers/professional's growth in the workplace is dependent on factors such as improved/quality service delivery, efficiency innovativeness etcetera (etc). Interestingly, these factors can only be acquired through training and development, Ordinarily, developing an employee or a hired professional to become more efficient in the job is a shared responsibility of employer and the individual employee. It is the responsibility of management to provide the right resources and an environment that supports the growth and development needs of the individual employee/professional (Andy, 2018). In most organizations, the focus of Human Resource Development is on developing the most superior workforce which helps the organization for successive growth (Pallavi & Parinita, 2017). When it comes to personal development many organizations don't really care much (Leggett & Bunker, 2006; Challis&Stone2001). However, it is

quite unfortunate to accept the fact that most organizations today are reluctant to training their people (Viren, 2022). By this, such organizations are inadvertently contributing to the high level of employee turnover (Sandrine, 2021). Not only has this lead to high level of employee turnover, it has hindered employees and professionals growth and most importantly it leads low quality service delivery, lack of innovativeness, lack of efficiency, lower level of performance resulting in less profit (Gendron, 2022). It is against this backdrop that many research works are being carried out with aim of investigating either the impact or importance of training and development with regards to performance, productivity or efficiency of employees and professionals. For instance, Devi and Nagurvali (2012) investigated the impact of training and development towards the performance of employees. At the end it was concluded that trained employees perform better than untrained employees. The authors stressed that training helps organizations in achieving their strategic objectives and provides organizations with a competitive advantage. Also, in the investigation of Elnaga and Imran (2013) on the impact of training with regards to the performance of employees, it was concluded that training optimizes the performance of employees. These and some other past studies have set a direction in measuring of development and training in relation to employee performance, achievement of organizational goals and competitive advantage. But in the real sense, all employees are needed to be valued. This can only be achieved through proper strategic implementation of employee training and development programs.

Thus, there is need to measure self-development and training in a distinct parlance. It is on this premise that the researcher seeks to measure self-development and training with employees' growth; by investigating the relationship between self-development strategies and office manager growth in public universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis

H0₁: An organizational policy does not significantly moderate self-development strategies and office manager growth in Public Tertiary institutions in Rivers State Nigeria.

Organizational policies

Organizational policies are set of guidelines, rules, or principles that govern the behavior, decision-making, and actions within an organization. To Steve (2021), organizational policies are rules and regulations employees must follow to keep business running smoothly. Some are intended to provide guidance and be helpful to employees. While others aimed at protecting the business from legal risk and warn employees not to do certain things.

There are many policies upon which organizations base their operations. However, we shall focus on training and Development Policies, financial and time policies as the moderating variable of the study.

i. Training and Development policies.

As indicated by Nassazi (2013), Policies are in this way set up in operations and also human asset. In human asset, there could approaches on training and improvement, enrollment and choice and pay organization and pay. Leslie (2007), clarify training as a "learning knowledge, in that, it looks for a generally perpetual change in a person that will enhance his capacity to perform at work". This mean training policies must be outlined such that, it will include the either the changing or upgrading of abilities, learning, states of mind, and social conduct. Neelam (2014), sees training further, as the methods for giving new or current representatives the aptitudes they have to perform at their different employments. When policies encourage a practice of continuous learning and self-development, office managers are more likely to embrace opportunities for growth. On the contrary, if the organizational culture does not prioritize self-development or discourages taking time for personal growth activities, it can hinder office managers' motivation and ability to engage in self-development. Workplace or organizational support for self-development reflects an employee's perceptions regarding the degree to which his/her organization and supervisor are supportive of voluntary employee learning/development (Atkinson, 2002; Orvis & Leffler, 2011). As such,

organizational policies that support and encourage self-development create an advantageous environment for the office manager to grow. Employee Engagement, training and development policies according to Nassazi (2013) gave a way to deal with representative engagement, declaring that activity engagement and burnout were free perspectives and conversely identified with each other.

Office Manager Growth

Professionally, growth is defined by Herrity (2023), as the application of new experiences and skills to positively impact your current position and career pursuits. By expanding your skills and thinking ahead, you are preparing yourself to handle more responsibilities. In talking about the growth of office manager, Ben (2022) states that an office manager could be promoted or grow to be given more responsibility for managing projects, or provide cover for senior management duties. With experience and more qualifications and training, an office manager can become an Executive Assistants or executive officer.

The important role of office manager to the success of the organization cannot be overemphasized. This is akin to the fact that no organization cannot function effectively without an office manager. According to Oxford Languages Dictionary an office manager is a person who is responsible for organizing the day-to-day administrative duties of an organization. He is responsible for overseeing the general day-to-day of an office. In defining the responsibility of an office manager, Kerwin (2023) opines that office managers' duties and responsibilities vary depending on the business they work for, but essentially, they have similar tasks. Typically, this means they are responsible for general admin tasks, organizing departments, liaising with (Ben, 2022).

Measures of Office Manager Growth

For the purpose of this study workforce productivity was measured into: quality service delivery, innovativeness and efficient record management.

Quality Service Delivery

The discussion of quality service delivery as a measure of office managers' growth in this study shall be anchored in examining the phrase in its intangible features; Such as: time factor/saving and customer satisfaction. This is because of the fact that the term quality (being a qualifying adjective to service delivery) is an ambiguous and relative term. Basically, the term quality refers to the set of inherent properties of an object that allows satisfying stated or implied needs (Diaz, 2014). Service on the other hand is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another, which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. It is also said to be economic activities that create value and satisfaction (Jashal, 2023). Also, according to the oxford advanced learner's dictionary (international student's edition), service is defined as system that provides something that the public needs, organized by the government or a private company. Quality service is the act of meeting the expectation of the customers expect from the service.

Consequently the concept of quality service delivery is abstract and relatively concerned with the circumstances. As such its meaning can be understood by knowing the meaning of quality and service as explained. Quality service delivery a means different thing to different persons, sometimes it connotes: Assurance - exciting, reliance and self-assurance, Empathy - compassion, personalized interests given to customers, Reliability - delivering on time and Responsiveness - willing to help customers and provide without delay. It could also be seen as the regularity with which a service provider can provide efficient service to the customer. Quality service delivery is an important requirement for improving user satisfaction. Nevertheless, this study looks at quality service delivery as getting the best out of every activities involved in service, it involves continuously meeting the agreed customer requirement at the lowest cost by employees. Thus for any employee to be said to have grown, the rate at which he/she delivers an assigned duty or service is adjudged to be a measure for assessment of growth, promotion and capacity.

Innovativeness

Innovativeness is described in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "the skill and imagination to create new things. Innovativeness refers to the ability or tendency to create and introduce new ideas, products, processes, or improvements. It involves a mindset of creativity, originality, and a willingness to challenge the status quo. As opine by Tyson (2019), innovativeness involves skill and proficiency as well as an awareness of instances and causes for its application. It is the ability or readiness of an individual or organization to develop different types of innovations (Akgün, 2012; Engelen & Brettel, 2012; Ingram, 2013; Lennerts *et al*, 2016; Sommer *et al*, 2017). Fostering a culture of innovativeness by an employee or office manager can, will result in to Efficient in task/job delivery, adaptability at workplace as well as indispensability/relevance in which are measures of growth

Theoretical Review

This study will be anchored on Human Capital Theory proposed by Schultz in 1961 and developed by Becker in 1994. The Human Capital Theory suggests that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising workers' future income by increasing their lifetime earnings (Becker, 1994).

The human capital model suggests that an individual's decision to invest in training is based upon an examination of the net present value of the costs and benefits of such an investment. Individuals are assumed to invest in training during an initial period and receive returns to the investment in subsequent periods. This theory went further to say that investing in human capital via education, training, and one's outputs depend partly on the rate of return on the human capital one owns. According to Jin (2001), while it is true that formal education has expanded rapidly in many countries, a large portion of human capital accumulation in the forms of on-the-job training and other modes for working adults actually take place both inside and outside the workplace.

Notwithstanding, the biggest challenge to human capital theory as pointed out by Livingstone (1997) in Gunu, et al (2023) is underemployment of credentialed knowledge. Talking about a large number of people, who have invested many years of their lives in acquiring advanced formal educational qualifications; being unable to obtain commensurate jobs. Such situation is prevalent in most of the underdeveloped countries like Nigeria. Another short coming of human capital theory is that in countries like Nigeria, more emphasis is given to paper qualification rather than employee's personal skills and talents.

The justification for adopting this theory as the theoretical underpinning of this study is because of its relationship with the predictor variable of this study (Self-Development Strategies).

Another reason is because of the theories position that an individual's decision to invest in training is based upon an examination of the net present value and benefits of such an investment which is growth. Individuals, who invest in training during an initial period, will definitely receive returns to the investment in subsequent periods. Also, the human capital theory went further to posit that investing in human capital via education, training, and one's outputs depend partly on the rate of return on the human capital one owns. Most importantly that human capital accumulation in the forms of on-the-job training and other modes for working adults actually take place both inside and outside the workplace.

Research Design

This study adopted explanatory cross-sectional survey research design.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consist eight (8) public tertiary institutions in Rivers Nigeria. The tertiary institutions, rather than their staff served as the population of this study. This is because the criterion

variable "Office Manager Growth" manifests at the organizational level. Details of the list of the population of the study (i.e. public tertiary institutions in Rivers State) are presented in table1 below:

Table 1 List of Public Tertiary Institution in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	LIST OF INSTITUTION	LOCATION
1.	Rivers State University	NkpoluOroworoko Port Harcourt
2.	University of Port Harcourt	ChobaPort Harcourt.
3	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education	RumuolumeniPort Harcourt
4	Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	Rumuola Port Harcourt
5	Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic	Bori Rivers State
6	Rivers State School of Health of Technology	Rumueme Port Harcourt
7	Federal Government College Technical	Omoku Rivers State.
8	Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas	Bonny Rivers State

Instrumentation and Measurement

This study made use of primary data. The collection of primary data was done using a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument (questionnaire) is titled "Office Self-Development Strategies and Officer Manager Growth (SDSOMG)". A 4-point rating scale was used with the following response options: Strongly Agree (SA) 4; Agree (A) 3; Strongly Disagree (SD) 2; and Disagree (D) 1.

Method of Data Analysis

Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used for univariate analysis, Spearman rank order correlation was applied for the bivariate analysis while, Partial correlation is be used for the multivariate analysis. The test of hypotheses was done at 95% confidence level. If our statistical analysis shows that the significance level is below the cut-off value we have set (which is 0.05), the null hypothesis is to be rejected while alternate hypothesis is to be accepted when the significant value is below 0.05. Alternatively, if the significance level is above the cut-off value, the null hypothesis will be accepted.

In testing the hypotheses one to ten, the following rules were upheld in accepting or rejecting our null hypotheses. All the coefficient (r) values that indicated levels of significance (* or **) as calculated using SPSS were accepted and thus our alternate hypotheses were accepted and when no significance is indicated in the coefficient (r) value we rejected the null hypotheses. We set out a confidence interval at 0.05 level of significance to test the statistical significance of the study.

Results

Multivariate Analysis of the Contextual Variable- Organizational Policy

Partial correlation analysis of organizational policy as a contextual variable on the relationship between self- development and office manager growth of public tertiary institution is shown in Table 1.

Table 2 How Organizational Policies Moderate Self-Development Strategies and Office Manager Growth

Control Variables			Self- Development Strategies	Office Managers Growth	Organizational Policies
-none ^a		Correlation	1.000	.739	.895
	Self-Development Strategies	Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	76	76
	Office	Correlation	.739	1.000	.722

Organizational Policies	Manager Growth	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	76	0	76
		Correlation	.895	.722	1.000
	Organizational Policies	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		Df	76	76	0
		Correlation	1.000	.300	
	Self Development Strategies	Significance (2-tailed)	.	.008	
		Df	0	75	
		Correlation	.300	1.000	
	Office Manager Growth	Significance (2-tailed)	.008	.	
		Df	75	0	
		Correlation	.300	1.000	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: Research Desk, 2023.

In table 2 the zero-order correlation between self-development and office managers growth of public tertiary institution in Rivers State shows the correlation coefficient where organizational policy is not moderating the variables; and this is high at 0.895 and statistically significant p-value (=0.000) < (0.01). The partial correlation controlling for organizational policy, however, is 0.739 and statistically significant (p-value (=0.000) < (0.01).

Discussion of Findings

H0₁: An organizational policy does not significantly moderate self-development strategies and office manager growth. The Moderation was considered significant based on the result (r1>r2), thus the null hypothesis was rejected. As such the partial correlation coefficient result shows that the policies of public tertiary institutions, moderates the relationship between self- development strategies and office managers growth of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Organizational policies can shape the culture of learning within the organization. When policies promote a culture of continuous learning and self-development, office managers are more likely to embrace opportunities for growth. Conversely, if the organizational culture does not prioritize self-development or discourages taking time for personal growth activities, it can hinder office managers' motivation and ability to engage in self-development. When organizations have policies in place that promote and value self-development, office managers are more likely to engage in self-directed learning and personal growth activities. This support helps to reinforce the positive relationship between self-development and office managers' growth. Organizational policies, therefore, play a moderating role in the relationship between self-development and the growth of office managers. Policies that support, allocate resources, align with organizational goals, and foster a culture of learning can enhance the positive impact of self-development on office managers' growth. On the other hand, policies that do not prioritize or support self-development can limit office manager's growth potential.

CONCLUSION

Research objective was to ascertain the moderating effect of organizational policy on the relationship between self- development strategies and office manager growth of public tertiary institution in Rivers State. Implying that organizational policy in the organization is healthy to self-development and moderates their level of growth in the workplace. The findings led to a conclusion that organizational policy significantly moderates the relationship between self- development strategies and office manager growth of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, conclusions and the implications of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

- i. Public tertiary institution should invest in training office managers in courses on digital literacy and the use of specific digital tools, such as Mobile Cloud Computing software, Advanced Spreadsheet collaboration tools for effective record security, information delivery. Also, there should be training on the use of workforce productivity software for efficient workflow and operations.
- ii. Organizational policies should be seen as very essential in the running of the institution. Therefore, in formulating policies, organizations should endeavor to make policies that encourage self-development, as well as reward system for employees who personally engage in training and development, as it will enhance quality service delivery, innovativeness efficient record management.

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