

## DIGITAL COST PALLIATIVE AND STAFF NORMATIVE COMMITMENT IN PAINT MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examined the relationship between digital work palliative and staff normative commitment of paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study adopted cross sectional explanatory survey research design. consisted of seven hundred (700) full time staff of nineteen (19) registered paint manufacturing firms operating in Rivers State. The sample size of the study consisted of 280 staff of the Paint Manufacturing Firms. The above sample size is obtainable using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination Table of 1970. Considering the disparity in the staff strength of the organizations, Bowley's (1960) Population Appropriation Formula was applied to determine the sample unit for each of the organizations. Structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for the collection of primary data. Face and content validity were done by supervisor and two other experts, whereas, Cronbach alpha was used to test the consistency (reliability). The researchers were able to retrieve two hundred and twenty-one (230) copies of the total questionnaire distributed. The presentation and analysis of data/results was done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 21.0.. It was found that digital work palliative has significant positive relationship with staff normative commitment in Paint Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State. It was concluded that through digital incentive, employees of the Paint Manufacturing Firms will be exposed to most internet connectivity components where they can source information that will aid job performance on the assumption of this free network, the employee will technically commit themselves to the organizational goals. The study recommends that Management of Paint Manufacturing Firms should ensure the provide free wifi network for staff consumption only on daily basis within the workplace; management of Paint Manufacturing Firms should bear the cost of repair of their staff's digital gadgets.*

**Keywords: Digital Work Palliative, Normative Commitment, Wifi Network**

### INTRODUCTION

Within the context of this work, digital cost palliative is seen as the provision of airtime and data subscription support for staff to reduce the cost of using the internet. More often than not, workers spend their own money on calls and data subscription as they communicate digitally with colleagues, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders (Ubani, 2020). Today, the use of Zoom application, WhatsApp and other social media platforms is very prominent in the work environment of Paint manufacturing firms. However, it appears that some of the Managers of Paint manufacturing firms make little or no provision for digital cost palliatives. The researcher's interaction with some of the firms, suggests that digital incentives is yet to be prioritized as part of staff benefits in Paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

The implication of the gross negligence associated with the provision of digital incentives is that most of them bear the cost of using internet data, laptops, and even printers in their office. As opined by Mark (2018) and Agada (2019), neglect of incentives as motivational tools can impact negatively on staff commitment level. The need for high staff commitment in paint manufacturing firms cannot be over-emphasized. It takes a lot of commitment on the part of staff to pursue the actualization of targets no matter how stressful it could be.

Staff commitment is concerned with the willingness, readiness and dedication of staff to remain and contribute meaningfully to the success of an organization. It is the psychological disposition of staff to work, and how they put in their best just to ensure that the organization functions efficiently and effectively (Otamiri et al., 2019). In line with the view of Allen and Meyer in Agada (2019), Zeb-Obipi and Agada (2018), this study measures staff commitment in terms of affective, normative and continuance commitment. Affective commitment refers to the passion possessed by staff to remain in an organization owing to goals congruence, and acceptance to pursue organizational goals. Affectively committed employees have love for the organization they work for and it drives them to put in their best towards the achievement of corporate goals. Normative commitment refers to a feeling of obligation to remain with an organization considering the benefits derived from the organization that needs to be reciprocated obediently. Normatively committed employees abide by the norms, rules and regulations of the organization they work for. Continuance commitment has to do with the readiness of a staff to remain in an organization as a result of perceived limited alternative opportunities elsewhere, the fear of losing accruing benefit or investments made in the organization.

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between digital cost palliative and staff normative commitment in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

### **Digital Cost Palliative**

In the work place employees are faced with too many needs competing with their statutory remuneration in the presence of the skyrocketed inflation. Most of the unforeseen expenditure are occasioned by the outbreak of the global emergency of Covid-19. Production and administrative staff of the Paint Manufacturing Firms in this part of the world are new in the use of digital resources in managing internal and external communication needs. Most times, employees use their own money to subscribe their phones in order to use digital communication channels. This unusual performance injected into the workforce called for digital cost palliative. However, the concept is a novel one which research effort have not been made to unravel how the concept affect performance of employees.

Notwithstanding, digital cost palliative is the subscription of airtime data to the mobile line of the employees to enable it perform task adequately. Awala (2018) averred that digital cost palliative involves the improvement of the employee welfare through digital incentive like the subscription of the employee digital bills. Digital palliative improves performance of employees since it relieves the burden of digital costs from employees. This palliative is the assistance obtain from either employer or organization to employees in order cushion the effect of a circumstance. Meridith (2015) explained digital palliative as any digital or ICT source or medium that encourages an employee or group of employees to perform better and to exert more effort beyond expectations. Jacob (2018) describes digital cost palliative as the digital incentive offered to motivate employees in the workplace for organizational productivity and also reduce the pains of the employees associated with the particular challenge.

Basically, digital palliative can manifest in: Financial palliative and non-financial palliative. Financial palliative includes direct payment of cash for employees to subscribe his or her digital devices while non-financial palliative may be in the form of subscription of employee digital devices. It can also be in the form of subsidizing the employees either data or otherwise. Hartman, Kurtzand and Moser (2016) state that palliatives are one technique by which employee " carry out their end of the employment contract, that is, compensating employee as a result of a social imbalance in the system. It is expected that the prospect of the palliative provision will „trigger“ the desired

employee productivity behaviour in the employee and thus will feel less burden and have more bond with the organization. Palliative could be either individual or group (organization wide). In this research, digital palliatives are designed to motivate employees to improve their employee productivity to increase effort and output and by producing better results expressed in such terms as objectives for profit, productivity, sales turnover, cost reduction, quality customer service and on time delivery (Meridith, 2015). The primary purpose of an digital palliative is to encourage efficiency and effectiveness from individuals and work groups. The assumption usually made by management is that money or cash alone may not motivate employees especially to cushion the effect of the circumstances that surround the employees.

### **Normative Commitment**

Normative commitment is the bond an employee has with an organization based on a sense of reciprocity by which the employee feels obligated to remain with the organization in appreciation of what the organization has offered the employee. Employees who are normatively committed remain with the organization as a responsive appreciation for benefits enjoyed by them in the organization. This type of commitment typifies a feeling of indebtedness towards an organization considering what the organization has given to the employee. It can also be described as a reciprocal commitment (Ogadimma, 2010). Management of transportation firms in Rivers State cannot operate competitively without committed workforce. Normatively committed employee remain loyal to the organization as a way of appreciating the organization for what they have benefitted from the organization.

Normative commitment is the attachment an employee feels for an organization remain with the organization as a responsive appreciation to benefits enjoyed by the employee in the organization. This type of commitment typifies a feeling of indebtedness towards an organization considering what the organization has given to the employee. It can also be described as a reciprocal commitment. The researcher tenaciously agrees with the view of Chun-Chen and Ching-Sing (2011) that normative commitment may be rooted in feelings of indebtedness toward an organization for its supply of certain benefits, for example, tuition reimbursement or in-house training. The feelings of obligation may continue until the employees feel that they have "paid back" the debt (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The normatively committed employee feels thankful for the benefits offered by the organization such that he feels duty bound to continue working for the organization. Jaja and Okpu (2013) reports that normative commitment has to do with feelings of obligations employees have to continue with the organization. McDonald and Makin (2000) posit that society's norms and a feeling that employees ought to remain with the organization influence this commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1991) posit that employees whose parents have been long-term employees of an organization would have a strong normative commitment. This may result if the parents had stressed the importance of being loyal to their organization. Jha (2011) believes normative commitment is influenced by cultures that stress the importance of loyalty and devotion to institutions such as family, marriage, country, religion and employment organizations. Normative commitment manifests in the form of the employee feeling an obligation to stay, reciprocates and abides by the rules and regulations of the workplace. Employee is normatively committed to an organization if they are reciprocal in action. As opposed to feeling an obligation to stay, normatively committed employees also pay back to the organization by contributing sacrificially as well as showing organizational citizenship behaviour as a way of responding to the goodness of the organization. The reciprocal action here can be expressed through extra time, volunteering, and going extra miles to contributing to the attainment of organizational objectives.

### **Digital Cost Palliative and Staff commitment**

Digital cost palliative is the subscription of airtime data to the mobile line of the employees to enable them perform tasks adequately. Awala (2018) averred that digital cost palliative involves the improvement of the employee welfare through digital incentive like the subscription of the employee digital bills. Digital palliative improves the commitment of employees since it relieves them of digital costs. This palliative is the assistance obtain from either employer or organization to employees in order cushion the effect of a circumstance. When an employer provides digital cost palliatives, it goes a long way in communicating that the organization cares about the welfare of its employees. The realization that management cares about employee welfare ignites commitment.

Jacob (2019) describes digital cost palliative as the digital incentive offered to motivate employees in the workplace for organizational productivity and also reduce the pains of the employees associated with the particular challenges. The modern workplace is data-driven which demands employees to use data almost every time. The cost of sending or accessing heavy e-files and engaging in e-communication can cause employees to sigh if not provision is made by management. Thus, a sure way of making employees happy and committed to work is to provide digital cost palliatives. Meridith (2015) stated that digital palliative refers to any digital or ICT source or medium that encourages an employee or group of employees to perform better and to exert more effort beyond expectations. He also posited that free subscription of staff digital gadgets will improve their efficiency in performance of task which potentially leads to commitment to the ideology of the organization. Jacob (2018) maintained that the digital cost palliative provided for the employees injects the feeling of belongingness and reminds employees of how indebted, they are to the organization. Also, digital cost palliative motivates employees and raises the sense of obligation to duty. Here lies that assumption that digital cost palliative affect staff commitment. It is capable of building psychological devotion mentality building career with the organization not only on the circumstance of losing job but with the thought of mandate delivery.

### **Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Abraham Maslow developed the Hierarchy of Needs model in 1940-50s USA, and the Hierarchy of Needs theory remains valid today for understanding human motivation. It is one of the most resounding motivational theories in management literature (Osumo, 2012). Indeed, Maslow's ideas surrounding the Hierarchy of Needs highlights the responsibility of employers to provide a workplace social policies that encourages and enables academic staff to fulfil their own unique potential (self-actualization), are today more relevant than ever (Asele, 2017). By relieving the financial burdens on him.

The theory posits that people move up a needs hierarchy as they satisfy each of them and people are motivated by unsatisfied needs until they are fulfilled (Osumo, 2012). As each of these needs is significantly satisfied, it drives and forces the next need to emerge and people move up a needs hierarchy as they satisfy each of them. Maslow visualised the hierarchy as a pyramid. At the bottom of the needs hierarchy pyramid are physiological needs which include the basic needs for survival such as need for water, air, food and the need for sleep. At the middle of the pyramid is the safety, social and esteem needs, while the need for self-actualizing is right at the top of the pyramid. Maslow grouped the five needs into two categories; higher order needs and lower order needs. The physiological and the safety needs constituted the lower order needs. These lower order needs are mainly satisfied externally, they included basic needs. The social, esteem, and self-actualization needs constituted the higher order needs and are satisfied internally (Robbins, Judge, &Campbell, 2010).The model helped institutions to understand how to create incentive policies conditions in order to satisfy the needs of their employee (Mustapha, 1992).

The justification for this theory as one of the theoretical pillars of this study is predicated on the fact that the theory identified social needs as a higher order need that cannot be ignored. In addition to Paint Manufacturing Firms providing adequate incentive to address academic staff lower order needs (food, clothing, shelter, good water, and safety), they are secondarily expected to provide a lively, inclusive and social environment that will help academic staff satisfy their social needs. Man as a social animal thrives in a pool of social relation. Management needs to create a working enabling environment capable of assisting academic staff meet their social needs. The satisfaction of these needs through a lively and incentive program that will naturally win academic staff' love and willingness to work and meet the set objectives.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the cross-sectional explanatory survey research design. The population of the study consisted of seven hundred (700) full time staff of nineteen (19) registered paint manufacturing firms operating in Rivers State. The sample size of the study consisted of Two Hundred and Eighty (280) staff of the Paint Manufacturing Firms. The above sample size is obtainable using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination Table of 1970. Structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The data presentation and analysis of the work were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0. Descriptive statistical tools such as arithmetic mean and frequency tables were used to conduct univariate analysis (analysis of each of the sub-variables). The bivariate analysis was carried out using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The test of hypothesis was done at a significance level of 0.05 (two-tailed test). Partial Correlation was used to run the multivariate analysis.

**RESULTS**

**Digital Cost Palliative and Staff Commitment**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between digital cost palliative and staff normative commitment in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

**Correlations between Digital Cost Palliative and Staff Commitment**

		Digital Cost Palliative		Normative Commitment			
Spearman's rho	Digital Cost Palliative	Correlation	1.000	<b>0.969**</b>	<b>0.554**</b>	<b>0.899**</b>	
		Coefficient					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	
		N	221	221	221	221	
		Normative Commitment	Correlation	<b>0.969**</b>	1.000	0.785**	0.786**
			Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.	.000	.000	
		N	221	221	221	221	
		Digital Cost Palliative	Correlation	<b>0.554**</b>	0.785**	1.000	0.646**
			Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.	.000	
		N	221	221	221	221	
Normative Commitment		Correlation	<b>0.899**</b>	0.786**	0.646**	1.000	
		Coefficient					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.		
	N	221	221	221	221		

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

**Source: SPSS Output**

Column four of table above shows  $r$  value of 0.899 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating digital cost palliative and staff normative commitment. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) which states that there is no significant relationship between digital cost palliative and staff normative commitment in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a1}$ ) was accepted. This implies that there is a very high positive relationship between digital cost palliative and staff normative commitment in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

### **Digital Cost Palliative and Staff Normative Commitment**

The test of hypothesis one revealed that there is significant positive relationship between digital cost palliative and staff commitment of paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. This implies that paint manufacturing firms that top airtime, subscribes for their staff and shoulder cost of digital maintenance are in better position to attain staff commitment in terms of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. To this end, Awala (2018) found that digital cost palliative involves the improvement of the employee welfare through digital incentive like the subscription of the employee digital bills. Digital palliative improves the commitment of employees since it relieves them of digital costs. This palliative is the assistance obtain from either employer or organization to employees in order cushion the effect of a circumstance. When an employer provides digital cost palliatives, it goes a long way in communicating that the organization cares about the welfare of its employees.

Similarly, Jacob (2019) revealed that digital cost palliative as the digital incentive offered to motivate employees in the workplace for organizational productivity and also reduce the pains of the employees associated with the particular challenges. The modern workplace is data-driven which demands employees to use data almost every time. The cost of sending or accessing heavy e-files and engaging in e-communication can cause employees to sigh if not provision is made by management. Thus, a sure way of making employees happy and committed to work is to provide digital cost palliatives. Also, Meridith (2015) found that digital cost palliative motivates employees and raises the sense of obligation to duty. Here lies that assumption that digital cost palliative affects staff commitment. It is capable of building psychological devotion mentality building career with the organization not only on the circumstance of losing job but with the thought of mandate delivery.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the analyses and discussion of findings, the study concluded that digital work palliative incentive relates with staff commitment in Paint Manufacturing Firms Rivers State. Through digital incentive, employees of the Paint Manufacturing Firms will be exposed to most internet connectivity components where they can source information that will aid job performance on the assumption of this free network, the employee will technically commit themselves to the organizational goals.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of Paint Manufacturing Firms should assist staff with data subscription for optimal commitment.
2. Management of Paint Manufacturing Firms should bear the cost of repair of their staff's digital gadgets.
3. Management of Paint Manufacturing Firms should ensure their staff are given free airtime every weekend.

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